

SPRINGHAVEN

a TALE of
the
GREAT WAR



R. D. BLACKMORE



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ERÊMA ; OR, MY FATHER'S
SIN.

TOMMY UPMORE.

SPRINGHAVEN.

A TALE OF THE GREAT WAR.

BY

RICHARD DODDRIDGE BLACKMORE,

AUTHOR OF "TOMMY UPMORE," ETC.

Ἐπιμνήσομαι ἁμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SPRINGHAVEN.



CHAPTER I.

ENTER AND EXIT.

THE summer having been fine upon the whole, and a very fair quantity of fish brought in, Miss Twemlow had picked up a sweetheart, as the unromantic mothers of the place expressed it. And the circumstances were of such a nature that very large interest was aroused at once, and not only so but was fed well and grew fast.

The most complete of chronicles is no better than a sponge of inferior texture and with many mouths shut. Parts that are full of suctive power get no chance of sucking; other parts have a flood of juice bubbling at them, but are waterproof. This is the only excuse—except one—for the shameful neglect of the family of Blocks, in any little treatise pretending to give the dullest of glimpses at Springhaven.

The other excuse—if self-accusation does not poke a finger through it—is that the Blockses were mainly of the dry land, and never went to sea when they could help it. If they had lived beyond the two trees and the stile, that marked the parish-boundary upon the hill towards London, they might have been spotless, and grand, and even honest, yet must have been the depth of the hills below contempt. But they dwelt in the village for more generations than would go upon any woman's fingers, and they did a little business with the fish caught by the others, which enabled it to look after three days' journey, as if it swam into town upon its own fins. The inventions for wronging mankind pay a great deal better than those for righting them.

Now the news came from John Prater's first, that a gentleman of great renown was coming down from London city, to live on fish fresh out of the sea. His doctors had ordered him to leave off butcher's meat, and baker's bread, and tea-grocer's tea, and almost every kind of inland victuals, because of the state of his—something big, which even Springhaven could not pronounce. He must keep himself up, for at least three months, upon nothing but breezes of the sea, and malt-liquor, and farmhouse bread, and milk, and new-laid eggs, and anything he fancied that came out of the sea, shelly, or scaly, or jellified,

or weedy. News from a public-house grows fast—as seeds come up quicker for soaking—and a strong competition for this gentleman arose; but he knew what he was doing, and brought down his cook and housemaid, and disliking the noise at the *Darling Arms*, took no less than five rooms at the house of Matthew Blocks, on the rise of the hill, where he could see the fish come in.

He was called at once Sir Parsley Sugarloaf, for his name was Percival Shargeloes; and his cook rebuked his housemaid sternly for meddling with matters beyond her sphere, when she told Mrs. Blocks that he was not Sir Percival, but only Percival Shargeloes, Esquire, very high up in the Corporation, but too young to be Lord Mayor of London for some years. He appeared to be well on the right side of forty; and every young lady on the wrong side of thirty possessing a pony, or even a donkey, with legs enough to come down the hill, immediately began to take a rose-coloured view of the many beauties of Springhaven.

If Mr. Shargeloes had any ambition for title, it lay rather in a military direction. He had joined a regiment of City volunteers, and must have been a Captain, if he could have stood the drill. But this, though not arduous, had out-gone his ambition, nature having gifted him

with a remarkable power of extracting nourishment from food, which is now called assimilation. He was not a great feeder—people so blest seldom are—but nothing short of painful starvation would keep him lean. He had consulted all the foremost physicians about this, and one said “take acids,” another said “walk twenty miles every day with two Witney blankets on,” a third said, “thank God for it, and drink before you eat,” and the fourth (a man of wide experience) bade him marry the worst-tempered woman he knew. Then they all gave him pills to upset his stomach; but such was its power that it assimilated them. Despairing of these he consulted a Quack, and received the directions which brought him to Springhaven. And a lucky day for him it was, as he confessed for the rest of his life, whenever any ladies asked him.

Because Miss Twemlow was intended for him by the nicest adjustment of nature. How can two round things fit together, except superficially? And in that case, one must be upper and the other under; which is not the proper thing in matrimony, though generally the prevailing one. But take a full moon and a half-moon, or even a square and a tidy triangle—with manners enough to have one right angle—and when you have put them into one another’s arms, there

they stick, all the firmer for friction. Jack Spratt and his wife are a case in point; and how much more pointed the case becomes, when the question is not about what is on the plate, but the gentleman is in his own body fat, and the lady in her elegant person, lean!

Mr. Sugarloaf—which he could not bear to be called—being an ardent admirer of the Church, and aware that her ministers know what is good, returned with great speed the Rector's call, having earnest hopes of some heartfelt words upon the difference between a right and left-handed sole. One of these is ever so much better than the other—according to our evolutionists; because when he was a cod, a few milliards of years back, he chose the right side to begin lying down on, that his descendants in the thirty millionth generation might get flat. His wife, from sheer perversity, lay down upon the other side; and this explains how some of their descendants pulled their eyes through their heads to one side, and some (though comparatively few) to the other. And the worst of it is that the fittest for the frying-pan did not survive this well-intended involution, except at a very long figure in the market.

As it fell out upon that day, Miss Twemlow was sitting in the drawing-room alone, waiting till her mother's hair was quite done up, her own

abundant locks being not done up at all, for she had lately taken to set her face against all foreign fashions. "I have not been introduced to the King," she said, "nor even to the Queen, like those forward Darlings; and I shall do my hair, to please myself." When her father objected, she quenched him with St. Paul; and even her mother, though shocked, began to think that Eliza knew what she was about. The release of her fine hair, which fell in natural waves about her stately neck, made her look nearly ten years younger than she was, for by this time she must have been eight-and-twenty. The ladies of the Carne race, as their pictures showed (until they were sold to be the grandmothers of drysalters), had always been endowed with shapely necks, fit columns for their small round heads. And this young lady's hair, with no constraint but that of a narrow band across the forehead, clustered and gleamed, like a bower of acanthus, round that Parian column.

Mr. Shargeloes, having obeyed his orders always to dine early, was thrilled with a vision of poetry and romance, as he crossed the first square of the carpet. The lady sat just where the light fell best from a filtered sunbeam to illumine her, without entering into the shady parts; and the poetry of her attitude was inspired by some very fine poetry upon her lap. "I

don't care what the doctors say; I shall marry that girl;" said Mr. Shargeloes to himself.

He was a man who knew his own mind, and a man with that gift makes others know it. Miss Twemlow clenched in the coat upon his back the nail she had driven through his heart, by calling him at every other breath, "Colonel Shargeloes." He said he was not that; but she felt that he was, as indeed every patriotic man must be. Her contempt for every man who forsook his country in this bitter bitter strait was at once so ruthless and so bewitching, that he was quite surprised into confessing that he had given £10,000 all in solid gold, for the comfort of the Royal Volunteers, as soon as the autumnal damps came on. He could not tell such an elegant creature, that what he had paid for was flannel-drawers; though she had so much strength of mind, that he was enabled to tell her before very long.

A great deal of nonsense is talked about ladies, who are getting the better of their first youth; as if they then hung themselves out as old slates for any man to write his name on. The truth is that they have better judgment then, less trouble in their hearts about a gentleman's appearance, and more enquiry in their minds as to his temper, tastes, and principles, not to mention his prospects of supporting them. And

even as concerns appearance, Mr. Shargeloes was very good. Nature had given him a fine stout frame, and a very pleasant countenance; and his life in the busy world had added that quickness of decision, and immediate sense of right, which a clever woman knows to be the very things she wants. Moreover his dress, which goes a very long way into the heart of a lady, was most correct and particular. For his coat was of the latest Bond-Street fashion, the "Jean de Brie," improved and beautified by suggestions from the Prince of Wales himself. Bright claret was the colour, and the buttons were of gold, bright enough to show the road before him as he walked. The shoulders were padded, as if a jam-pot stood there, and the waist buttoned tight, too tight for any happiness, to show the bright laticlave of brocaded waistcoat. Then followed breeches of rich purple padusoy, having white satin bows at the knee, among which the little silver bells of the Hessian boots were jingling.

Miss Twemlow was superior to all small feeling, but had great breadth of sympathy with the sterling truth in fashion. The volume of love, like a pattern-book, fell open; and this well-dressed gentleman was engraved upon her heart. The most captious young chit, such as Dolly herself, could scarcely have called him either corpulent or old. Every day he could be seen

to be growing younger, with the aid of fresh fish as a totally novel ingredient in his system; his muscle increased with the growth of brain-power, and the shoemaker was punching a fresh hole in his belt, an inch further back, every week he stopped there. After buckling up three holes, he proposed. Miss Twemlow referred him to her dear papa; and the rector took a week to enquire and meditate. "Take a month, if you like," said Mr. Shargeloes.

This reply increased the speed. Mr. Twemlow had the deepest respect for the Corporation, and to live to be the father of a Lord Mayor of London became a new ambition to lead on his waning years. "Come and dine with us on Saturday, and we will tell you all about it;" he said with a pleasant smile, and warm shake of the hand; and Shargeloes knew that the neck and the curls would bend over the broad gold chain some day.

How grievous it is to throw a big stone into a pool which has plenty of depth, and length, and width, for the rings to travel pleasantly, yet not to make one ring, because of wind upon the water! In the days that were not more than two years old, Springhaven could have taken all this news, with a swiftly expanding and smoothly fluent circle, with a lift of self-importance at the centre of the movement, and a

heave of gentle interest in the far reflective corners. Even now, with a tumult of things to consider, and a tempest of judgment to do it in, people contrived to be positive about a quantity of things still pending. Sir Parsley Sugarloaf had bought Miss Twemlow for £50,000, they said, and he made her let her curls down so outrageous, because she was to be married at Guildhall, with a guinea at the end of every hair. Miss Faith would be dirt-cheap at all that money; but as for Miss Eliza, they wished him better knowledge, which was sure to come, when it was no good to him.

“What a corner of the world this is for gossip!” Mr. Shargeloes said pleasantly to his Eliza, having heard from his cook, who desired no new mistress, some few of the things said about him. “I am not such a fool as to care what they say. But I am greatly surprised at one thing. You know that I am a thorough Englishman; may I tell you what I think, without offending you? It is a delicate matter, because it concerns a relative of your own, my dear.”

“I know what you mean. You will not offend me. Percival, I know how straightforward you are, and how keen of perception. I have expected this.”

“And yet it seems presumptuous of me to say

that you are all blind here, from the highest to the lowest. Except indeed yourself, as I now perceive. I will tell you my suspicions, or more than suspicions—my firm belief about your cousin, Mr. Carne. I can trust you to keep this even from your father. Caryl Carne is a spy, in the pay of the French.”

“I have long thought something, though not quite so bad as that,” Miss Twemlow answered calmly; “because he has behaved to us so very strangely. My mother is his own father’s sister, as you know, and yet he has never dined with us more than once, and then he scarcely said a word to any one. And he never yet has asked us to visit him at the castle; though for that we can make all allowance, of course, because of its sad condition. Then everybody thought he had taken to smuggling; and after all his losses, no one blamed him, especially as all the Carnes had done it, even when they were the owners of the land. But ever since poor Mr. Cheeseman, our churchwarden, tried to destroy himself with his own rope, all the parish began to doubt about the smuggling, because it pays so well and makes the people very cheerful. But from something he had seen, my father felt quite certain that the true explanation was smuggling.”

“Indeed! Do you know at all what it was

he saw, and when, and under what circumstances?" Mr. Shargeloes put these questions with more urgency than Miss Twemlow liked.

"Really I cannot tell you all those things; they are scarcely of general interest. My dear father said little about it; all knowledge is denied in this good world to women. But no doubt, he would tell you, if you asked him, when there were no ladies present."

"I will," said Mr. Shargeloes; "he is most judicious; he knows when to speak, and when to hold his tongue. And I think that you combine with beauty one of those two gifts—which is the utmost to be expected."

"Percival, you put things very nicely; which is all that could be expected of a man. But do take my advice in this matter, and say no more about it."

Mr. Shargeloes feigned to comply, and perhaps at the moment meant to do so. But unluckily he was in an enterprising temper, proud of recovered activity, and determined to act up to the phosphate supplied by fish-diet. Therefore when the rector, rejoicing in an outlet for his long pent-up discoveries, and regarding this sage man as one of his family, repeated the whole of his adventure at Carne Castle, Mr. Shargeloes said briefly—"It must be seen to."

"Stubbard has been there," replied Mr.

Twemlow, repenting perhaps of his confidence ; “ Stubbard has made an official inspection, which relieves us of all concern with it.”

“ Captain Stubbard is an ass. It is a burning shame that important affairs should be entrusted to such fellows. The country is in peril, deadly peril ; and every Englishman is bound to act, as if he were an officer.”

That very same evening Carne rode back to his ruins, in a very grim state of mind. He had received from the Emperor a curt and haughty answer to his last appeal for immediate action ; and the prospect of another gloomy winter here, with dangers thickening round him, and no motion to enliven them, was almost more than he could endure. The nights were drawing in, and a damp fog from the sea had drizzled the trees, and the ivy, and even his own moustache with cold misery.

“ Bring me a lantern,” he said to old Jerry, as he swung his stiff legs from the back of the jaded horse, “ and the little flask of oil with the feather in it. It is high time to put the Inspector’s step in order.”

Jerry Bowles, whose back and knees were bent with rheumatism and dull service, trotted (like a horse who has become too stiff to walk) for the things commanded and came back with them. Then his master, without a word, strode

towards the passage giving entry to the vaults, which Stubbard had not seen; the vaults containing all the powder, and the weapons for arming the peasantry of England, whom Napoleon fondly expected to rise in his favour, at sight of his eagles.

“How does it work? Quite stiff with rust. I thought so. Nothing is ever in order, unless I see to it myself. Give me the lantern. Now oil the bearings thoroughly. Put the feather into the socket, and work the pin in and out, that the oil may go all round. Now pour in some oil from the lip of the flask; but not upon the treadle, you old blockhead. Now do the other end the same. Ah, now it would go with the weight of a mouse! I have a great mind to make you try it.”

“What would you do, sir, if my neck was broken? Who would do your work, as I do?”

They were under an arch of mouldy stone, opening into the deep dark vaults, where the faint light of the lantern glanced on burnished leather, brass, and steel, or fell without flash upon dull round bulk. The old man, kneeling on the rough chalk-flints set in lime for the flooring of the passage, was handling the first step of the narrow step-ladder leading to the cellar-depth. This top-step had been taken out of the old oak mortice, and cut shorter, and then replaced in

the frame, with an iron pin working in an iron collar, just as the gudgeon of a wheel-barrow revolves. Any one, stepping upon it unawares, would go down without the aid of any other step.

“Goes like spittle now, sir,” said old Jerry; “but I don’t want no more harm in this crick of life. The Lord be pleased to keep all them Examiners at home. Might have none to find their corpusses until next leap-year. I hope with all my heart, they won’t come poking their long noses here.”

“Well, I rather hope they will. They want a lesson in this neighbourhood;” muttered Carne, who was shivering, and hungry, and unsweetened.

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER SCUDAMORE.

IF we want to know how a tree or flower has borne the gale that flogged last night, or the frost that stung the morning, the only sure plan is to go and see. And the only way to understand how a friend has taken affliction, is to go—if it may be done without intrusion—and let him tell you, if he likes.

Admiral Darling was so much vexed when he heard of Blyth Scudamore's capture by the French, and duty compelled him to inform the mother, that he would rather have ridden a thousand miles upon barley-bread than face her. He knew how the whole of her life was now bound up with the fortunes of her son, and he longed to send Faith with the bad news, as he had sent her with the good before; but he feared that it might seem unkind. So he went himself, with the hope of putting the best complexion upon it, yet fully expecting sad distress, and perhaps a burst of weeping. But the lady

received his tidings, in a manner that surprised him. At first she indulged in a tear or two, but they only introduced a smile.

“In some ways, it is a sad thing,” she said, “and will be a terrible blow to him, just when he was rising so fast in the service. But we must not rebel more than we can help, against the will of the Lord, Sir Charles.”

“How philosophical, and how commonplace !” thought the Admiral ; but he only bowed, and paid her some compliment upon her common-sense.

“Perhaps you scarcely understand my views, and perhaps I am wrong in having them,” Lady Scudamore continued quietly. “My son’s advancement is very dear to me ; and this will of course retard it. But I care most of all for his life ; and now that will be safe for a long while. They never kill their prisoners, do they ?”

“No, Ma’am, no. They behave very well to them ; better, I’m afraid, than we do to ours. They treat them quite as guests, when they fall into good hands. Though Napoleon himself is not too mild in that way.”

“My son has fallen into very good hands, as you yourself assure me—that Captain Desportes, a gallant officer and kind gentleman, as I know from your daughter’s description. Blyth is quite equal to Lord Nelson in personal daring, and

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possibly not behind him in abilities. Consider how shockingly poor Nelson has been injured; and he feels convinced himself that they will have his life at last. No officer can be a hero, without getting very sad wounds, and perhaps losing his life. Every one who does his duty must at least be wounded."

The Admiral, who had never received a scratch, was not at all charmed with this view of naval duty; but he was too polite to enter protest, and only made one of his old-fashioned scrapes.

"I am sure, every time I have heard a gun coming from the sea, and especially after dark," the lady resumed, without thinking of him, "it has made me miserable to know that probably Blyth was rushing into some deadly conflict. But now I shall feel that he cannot do that; and I hope they will keep him until the fighting grows milder. He used to send me all his money, poor dear boy! And now I shall try to send him some of mine, if it can be arranged about bank-notes. And now I can do it very easily, thanks to your kindness, Sir Charles,—his father's best friend, and his own, and mine!"

Lady Scudamore shed another tear or two, not of sorrow but of pride, while she put her hand into her pocket, as if to begin the remittance at once. "You owe me no thanks,

Ma'am," said the Admiral, smiling; "if any thanks are due, they are due to the King, for remembering at last, what he should have done before."

"Would he ever have thought of me, but for you? It is useless to talk in that way, Sir Charles; it only increases the obligation, which I must entreat you not to do. How I wish I could help you in anything!"

"Every day you are helping me," he replied, with truth; "although I am away too often to know all about it, or even to thank you. I hope my dear Faith has persuaded you not to leave us for the winter, as you threatened."

"Faith can persuade me to anything she pleases. She possesses the power of her name," replied the lady; "but the power is not called for, when the persuasion is so pleasant. For a month, I must be away to visit my dear mother, as I always have done at this time of year; and then, but for one thing, I would return most gladly. For I am very selfish, you must know, Sir Charles,—I have a better chance of hearing of my dear son, at these head-quarters of the defence of England, than I should have even in London."

"Certainly," cried the Admiral, who magnified his office; "such a number of despatches pass through my hands; and if I can't make

them out, why my daughter Dolly can. I don't suppose, Lady Scudamore, that even when you lived in the midst of the world, you ever saw any girl half so clever as my Dolly. I don't let her know it—that would never do, of course—but she always gets the best of me, upon almost any question !”

Sir Charles, for the moment, forgot his best manners, and spread his coat so that one might see between his legs. “I stand like this,” he said, “and she stands there; and I take her to task for not paying her bills—for some of those fellows have had to come to me, which is not as it should be in a country place, where people don't understand the fashionable system. She stands there, Ma'am; and I feel as sure as if I were an English seventy-four bearing down upon a Frenchman of fifty guns, that she can only haul her colours down and rig out gangway-ladders,—when bless me and keep me, I am carried by surprise, and driven under hatchways, and if there is a guinea in my hold, it flies into the enemy's locker! If it happened only once, I should think nothing of it. But when I know exactly what is coming, and have double-shotted every gun, and set up hammock-nettings, and taken uncommon care to have the weather-gage, 'tis the Devil, Lady Scudamore—excuse me, Madam—'tis the Devil to a ditty-bag, that I

have her at my mercy. And yet it always comes to money out of pocket, Madam ! ”

“ She certainly has a great power over gentlemen ; ” Blyth’s mother smiled demurely, as if she were sorry to confess it ; “ but she is exceedingly young, Sir Charles ; and every allowance must be made for her. ”

“ And by the Lord Harry, she gets it, Madam. She takes uncommonly good care of that. But what is the one thing you mentioned, that would prevent you from coming back to us with pleasure ? ”

“ I scarcely like to speak of it. But it is about that self-same Dolly. She is not fond of advice, and she knows how quick she is, and that makes her resent a word from slower people. She has taken it into her head, I fear, that I am here as a restraint upon her ; a sort of lady-spy, a duenna, a dictatress, all combined in one, and all unpleasant. This often makes me fancy that I have no right to be here. And then your sweet Faith comes, and all is smooth again. ”

“ Dolly has the least little possible touch of the vixen about her. I have found it out lately, ” said the Admiral, as if he were half-doubtful still ; “ Nelson told me so, and I was angry with him. But I believe he was right, as he generally is. His one eye sees more than a score of mine would. But, my dear Madam, if that is your

only objection to coming back to us, or rather to my daughters, I beg you not to let it weigh a feather's weight with you. Or at any rate, enhance the obligation to us, by putting it entirely on one side. Dolly has the very finest heart in all the world; not so steady perhaps as Faith's, nor quite so fair to other people; but wonderfully warm, Ma'am, and as sound as—as a roach."

Lady Scudamore could not help laughing a little, and she hoped for her son's sake that this account was true. Her gratitude and good-will to the Admiral, as well as her duty to her son, made her give the promise sought for; and she began to prepare for her journey at once, that she might be back in good time for the winter. But she felt very doubtful, at leaving the Hall, whether she had done quite right in keeping her suspicions of Dolly from Dolly's father. For with eyes which were sharpened by jealousy for the interests, or at least the affections of her son, she had long perceived that his lady-love was playing a dangerous game with Caryl Carne. Sometimes she believed that she ought to speak of this, for the good of the family; because she felt the deepest mistrust and dislike of Carne, who strictly avoided her, whenever he could; but on the other hand she found the subject most delicate and difficult to handle. For she

had taken good care at the outset, not to be here upon any false pretences. At the very first interview with her host, she had spoken of Blyth's attachment to his younger daughter, of which the Admiral had heard already from that youthful sailor. And the Admiral had simply said, as in Captain Twemlow's case—"Let us leave them to themselves. I admire the young man. If she likes him, I shall make no objection, when they are old enough, and things are favourable." And now if she told him of the other love-affair, it would look like jealousy of a rival. Perhaps a hundred times a day, as her love for gentle Faith grew faster than her liking for the sprightly Dolly, she would sigh that her son did not see things like herself; but bitter affliction had taught her that the course of this life follows our own wishes, about as much as another man's dog heeds our whistle. But for all that, this good lady hoped some day to see things come round, as she would like to bring them.

"No wonder that we like her son so much," said Faith when they had done waving handkerchiefs at the great yellow coach going slowly up the hill, with its vast wicker basket behind, and the guard perched over it with his blunderbuss; "he takes after his mother in so many ways. They are both so simple and unsuspecting, and they make the best of every one."

“Including themselves, I suppose,” answered Dolly; “well, I like people who have something on their minds, and make the worst of everybody. They have so much more to talk about.”

“You should never try to be sarcastic, dear. And you know that you don’t mean it. I am sure you don’t like to have the worst made of yourself.”

“Oh, I have long been used to that. And I never care about it, when I know it is not true. I am sure that Mother Scudamore runs me down, when I am out of hearing. I never did like those perfect people.”

“Mother Scudamore, indeed! You are getting into a low way of talking, which is not at all pretty in a girl. And I never heard her say an unkind word about you. Though she may not have found you quite so perfect as she hoped.”

“I tell you, Miss Darling,” cried Dolly with her bright colour deepened, and her gray eyes flashing, “that I don’t care a—something that papa often says—what she thinks about me, or you either. I know that she has come here to spy out all my ways.”

“You should not have any to be spied out, Dolly;” Faith answered, with some sternness, and a keen look at her sister, whose eyes fell beneath her gaze. “You will be sorry, when

you think of what you said to me, who have done nothing whatever to offend you. But that is a trifle compared with acting unfairly to our father. Father is the kindest man that ever lived; but he can be stern in great matters, I warn you. If he ever believes that you have deceived him, you will never be again to him what you have always been."

They had sent the carriage home, that they might walk across the fields; and this little scene between the sisters took place upon a footpath which led back to their grounds. Dolly knew that she was in the wrong, and that increased her anger.

"So you are another spy upon me, I suppose. 'Tis a pretty thing to have one's sister for an old Duenna. Pray, who gave you authority to lord it over me?"

"You know as well as I do"—Faith spoke with a smile of superior calmness, as Dolly tossed her head—"that I am about the last person in the world to be a spy. Neither do I ever lord it over you. If anything, that matter is very much the other way. But being so much older, and your principal companion, it would be very odd of me, and as I think most unkind, if I did not take an interest in all your goings on."

"My goings on! What a ladylike expression! Who has got into a low way of talking

now? Well, if you please, Madam, what have you found out?"

"I have found out nothing, and made no attempt to do so. But I see that you are altered very much from what you used to be; and I am sure that there is something on your mind. Why not tell me all about it? I would promise to let it go no further, and I would not pretend to advise, unless you wished. I am your only sister, and we have always been together. It would make you so much more comfortable, I am certain of that, in your own mind, darling. And you know when we were little girls, dear mother on her death-bed, put her hands upon our heads and said—'be loving sisters always, and never let anything come between you.' And for father's sake too, you should try to do it. Put aside all nonsense, about spies and domineering, and trust me as your sister, that's my own darling Dolly."

"How can I resist you? I will make a clean breast of it;" Dolly sighed deeply, but a wicked smile lay ambushed in her bright eyes and upon her rosy lips. "The sad truth is, that my heart has been quite sore, since I heard the shocking tidings about poor old Daddy Stakes. He went to bed, the other night, with his best hat on, both his arms in an old muff he had found in the ditch, and his leathern breeches turned inside out!"

“Then the poor old man had a cleaner breast than yours ;” cried Faith, who had prepared her heart and eyes for tears of sympathy ; “he goes upon his knees every night, stiff as they are, and his grand-daughter has to help him up. But as for you, you are the most unfeeling, mocking, Godless, unnatural creature, that ever never cared what became of anybody ! Here we are at the corner, where the path divides ! You go home that way, and I’ll go home by this.”

“Well, I am so glad ! I really did believe that it was quite impossible to put you in a rage. Now, don’t be in a hurry, dear, to beg my pardon.”

“Of that you may be quite sure,” cried Faith, across the corner of the meadow, where the paths diverged ; “I never was less in a passion, in my life ; and it will be your place to apologise.”

Dolly sent a merry laugh across the widening interval ; and Faith, who was just beginning to fear that she had been in a passion, was convinced by that laugh that she had not. But the weight lifted from her conscience fell more heavily upon her heart.

CHAPTER III.

EVIL COMMUNICATIONS.

ALTHOUGH she pretended to be so merry, and really was so self-confident (whenever anybody wanted to help her), Miss Dolly Darling, when left to herself, was not like herself, as it used to be. Her nature was lively, and her spirit very high; every one had petted her, before she could have earned it by aught, except childish beauty; and no one had left off doing it, when she was bound to show better claim to it. All this made doubt, and darkness, and the sense of not being her own mistress very snappish things to her; and she gained relief—sweet-tempered as she was, when pleased—by a snap at others. For although she was not given, any more than other young people are, to plaguesome self-inspection, she could not help feeling that she was no longer the playful young Dolly that she loved so well. A stronger, and clearer, yet more mysterious will than her own had conquered hers; but she would not confess it, and yield

entire obedience, neither could she cast it off. Her pride still existed, as strong as ever, whenever temper roused it; but there was too much of vanity in its composition, and too little of firm self-respect. Contempt from a woman she could not endure, neither from a man, if made manifest; but Carne so calmly took the upper hand, without any show of having it, that she fell more and more beneath his influence.

He, knowing thoroughly what he was about, did nothing to arouse resistance. So far as he was capable of loving any one, he was now in love with Dolly. He admired her quickness, and pretty girlish ways, and gaiety of nature (so unlike his own), and most of all her beauty. He had made up his mind that she should be his wife, when fitted for that dignity; but he meant to make her useful first, and he saw his way to do so. He knew that she acted more and more as her father's secretary, for she wrote much faster than her sister Faith, and was quicker in catching up a meaning. Only it was needful to sap her little prejudices—candour to wit, and the sense of trust, and above all patriotic feeling. He rejoiced when he heard that Lady Scudamore was gone, and the rector had taken his wife and daughter for change of air to Tunbridge Wells, Miss Twemlow being seriously out of health through anxiety about Mr. Shargeloes. For that

gentleman had disappeared, without a line or message, just when Mr. Furkettle, the chief lawyer in the neighbourhood, was beginning to prepare the marriage-settlement; and although his cook and housemaid were furious at the story, Mrs. Blocks had said, and all the parish now believed that Sir Parsley Sugarloaf had flown away to Scotland, rather than be brought to book—that fatal part of the Prayer-book,—by the rector and three or four brother clergymen.

This being so, and Frank Darling absorbed in London with the publication of another batch of poems, dedicated to Napoleon, while Faith stood aloof with her feelings hurt, and the Admiral stood off and on in the wearisome cruise of duty, Carne had the coast unusually clear for the entry and arrangement of his contraband ideas. He met the fair Dolly almost every day, and their interviews did not grow shorter, although the days were doing so.

“You should have been born in France,” he said, one bright November morning, when they sat more comfortable than they had any right to be, upon the very same seat where the honest but hapless Captain Scuddy had tried to venture to lisp his love; “that is the land you belong to, darling, by beauty and manners and mind and taste, and most of all by your freedom from prejudice, and great liberality of sentiment.”

“But I thought we were quite as good-looking in England;” Dolly lifted her long black lashes, with a flash which might challenge the brilliance of any French eyes; “but of course you know best. I know nothing of French ladies.”

“Don’t be a fool, Dolly;” Carne spoke rudely, but made up for it in another way; “there never was a French girl to equal you in loveliness; but you must not suppose that you beat them all round. One point particularly you are far behind in. A Frenchwoman leaves all political questions, and national matters, and public affairs, entirely to her husband, or her lover, as the case may be. Whatever he wishes is the law for her. Thy gods shall be my gods.”

“But you said they had great liberality of sentiment; and now you say they have no opinions of their own! How can the two things go together?”

“Very easily,” said Carne, who was accustomed to be baffled by such little sallies; “they take their opinions from their husbands, who are always liberal. This produces happiness on both sides, a state of things unknown in England. Let me tell you of something important, mainly as it concerns yourself, sweet Dolly. The French are certain to unite with England, and then we shall be the grandest nation in the world. No

power in Europe can stand before us. All will be freedom, and civilization, and great ideas, and fine taste in dress. I shall recover the large estates, that would now be mine but for usury and fraud. And you will be one of the first ladies in the world, as nature has always intended you to be."

"That sounds very well; but how is it to be done? How can France unite with England, when they are bitter enemies? Is France to conquer England first? Or are we to conquer France, as we always used to do?"

"That would be a hard job now, when France is the mistress of the Continent. No, there need be no conquering, sweet Dolly, but only a little removal. The true interest of this country is—as that mighty party, the Whigs, perceive—to get rid of all the paltry forms and dry bones of a dynasty which is no more English than Napoleon is, and to join that great man in his warfare against all oppression. Your brother Frank is a leading spirit; he has long cast off that wretched insular prejudice, which defeats all good. In the grand new scheme of universal right, which must prevail very shortly, Frank Darling will obtain that foremost place, to which his noble views entitle him. You as his sister, and my wife, will be adored almost as much as you could wish."

“It sounds very grand,” answered Dolly, with a smile, though a little alarmed at this turn of it; “but what is to become of the King, and Queen, and all the Royal family? And what is my father to do, and Faith? Although she has not behaved well to me.”

“Those details will be arranged to everybody’s satisfaction. Little prejudices will subside, when it is seen that they are useless. Every possible care will be taken not to injure any one.”

“But how is it all to be done?” asked Dolly, whose mind was practical, though romantic. “Are the French to land, and over-run the country? I am sure I never should agree to that. Are all our defenders to be thrown into prison?”

“Certainly not. There will be no prisons. The French might have to land, as a matter of form; but not to over-run the country, only to secure British liberties and justice. All sensible people would hasten to join them, and any opposition would be quenched at once. Then such a glorious condition of mankind would ensue, as has never been known in this world—peace, wealth, universal happiness, gaiety, dancing everywhere, no more shabby clothes, no more dreary Sundays. How do you like the thought of it?”

“Well, some of it sounds very nice ; but I don’t see the use of universal justice. Justice means having one’s own rights ; and it is impossible for everybody to do that, because of other people. And as for the French coming to put things right, they had better attend to their own affairs first. And as if any Englishman would permit it ! Why even Frank would mount his wig and gown (for he is a full-fledged barrister now, you know), and come and help to push them back into the sea. And I hope that you would do so too. I am not going to marry a Frenchman. You belong to an old English family, and you were born in England, and your name is English, and the property that ought to belong to you. I hope you don’t consider yourself a Frenchman, because your mother is a great French lady, after so many generations of Carnes all English, every bit of them. I am an English girl, and I care very little for things that I don’t see—such as justice, liberty, rights of people, and all that. But I do care about my relations, and our friends, and the people that live here, and the boats, and all the trees, and the land that belongs to my father. Very likely you would want to take that away, and give it to some miserable Frenchman.”

“Dolly, my dear, you must not be excited ;” Carne answered, in the manner of a father ;

“powerful as your comprehension is, for the moment these things are beyond it. Your meaning is excellent, very good, very great; but to bring it to bear requires further information. We will sit by the side of the sea to-morrow, darling, if you grant me a view of your loveliness again; and there you will see things in a larger light than upon this narrow bench, with your father’s trees around us, and your father’s cows enquiring whether I am good to eat. Get away, cow! Do you take me for a calf?”

One of the cows best loved by Dolly, who was very fond of good animals, had come up to ask who this man was that had been sitting here so long with her. She was gifted with a white face and large soft eyes—even beyond the common measure of a cow—short little horns, that she would scarcely think of pushing even at a dog (unless he made mouths at her infant), a flat broad nose ever genial to be rubbed, and a delicate fringe of finely-pointed yellow hairs around her pleasant nostrils and above her clovery lips. With single-hearted charity, and enviable faith, she was able to combine the hope that Dolly had obtained a lover as good as could be found upon a single pair of legs. Carne was attired with some bravery, of the French manner rather than the English, and he wanted no butter

on his velvet and fine lace. So he swung round his cane of heavy snake-wood at the cow, and struck her poor horns so sharply that her head went round.

“Is that universal peace, and gentleness, and justice?” cried Dolly, springing up and hastening to console her cow. “Is this the way the lofty French redress the wrongs of England? What had poor Dewlips done, I should like to know? Kiss me, my pretty, and tell me how you would like the French army to land, as a matter of form? The form you would take would be beef, I’m afraid; not even good roast beef, but bouillon, potage, fricandeau, friture—anything one cannot taste any meat in; and that is how your wrongs would be redressed, after having had both your horns knocked off. And about the same fate for John Bull, your master, unless he keeps his horns well sharpened. Do I not speak the truth, Monsieur?”

When Carne did anything to vex Miss Dolly—which happened pretty often, for he could not stop to study much her little prejudices—she addressed him as if he were a Frenchman, never doubting that this must reduce him sadly in his self-esteem.

“Never mind matters political,” he said, perceiving that his power must not be pressed until he had deepened its foundations; “what

are all the politics in the world compared with your good opinion, Beauty?" Dolly liked to be called "Beauty," and the name always made her try to deserve it by looking sweet. "You must be quite certain that I would do nothing to injure a country which contains my Dolly. And as for Madam Cow, I will beg her pardon, though my cane is hurt a great deal more than her precious horns are. Behold me snap it in twain, although it is the only handsome one I possess, because it has offended you!"

"Oh, what a pity! What a lovely piece of wood!" cried Dolly; and they parted on the best of terms, after a warm vow upon either side, that no nasty politics should ever come between them.

But Carne was annoyed and discontented. He came to the edge of the cliff that evening below his ruined castle, for there are no cliffs at Springhaven, unless the headland deserves that name; and there he sat gloomily for some hours, revolving the chances of his enterprise. The weather had changed since the morning, and a chill November wind began to urge the waves ashore. The sky was not very dark, but shredded with loose grey vapours from the west, where a heavy bank of clouds lay under the pale crescent of a watery moon. In the distance two British cruisers shone, light ships of outlook, under easy

sail, prepared to send the signal for a hundred leagues from ship to ship and cliff to cliff, if any of England's foes appeared. They shone upon the dark sea, with canvas touched by moonlight, and seemed ready to spring against the lowering sky, if it held any menace to the land they watched, or the long reach of water they had made their own.

“A pest upon those watch-dogs!” muttered Carne. “They are always wide-awake, and for ever at their stations. Instead of growing tired, they get sharper every day. Even Charron can scarcely run through them now. But I know who could do it, if he could only be trusted. With a pilot-boat—it is a fine idea—a pilot-boat entered as of Pebble-ridge. The Pebble-ridge people hate Springhaven, through a feud of centuries; and Springhaven despises Pebble-ridge. It would answer well, although the landing is so bad, and no anchorage possible in rough weather. I must try if Dan Tugwell will undertake it. None of the rest know the coast as he does, and few of them have the bravery. But Dan is a very sulky fellow, very difficult to manage. He will never betray us, he is wonderfully grateful; and after that battle with the pressgang, when he knocked down the officer and broke his arm, he will keep pretty clear of the Union-jack. But he goes about moping,

and wondering, and mooning, as if he were wretched about what he has to do. Bless my soul, where is my invention? I see the way to have him under my thumb. Reason is an old coat hanging on a peg; passion is the fool who puts it on and runs away with it. Halloa! Who are you? And what do you want at such a time as this? Surely you can see that I am not at leisure now. Why Tugwell, I thought that you were far away at sea."

"So I was, sir; but she travels fast. I never would believe the old *London Trader* could be driven through the water so. Sam Polwhele knows how to pile it on a craft, as well as he do upon a man, sir. I won't serve under him no more, nor Captain Charcoal either. I have done my duty by you, Squire Carne, the same as you did by me, sir; and thanking you for finding me work so long, my meaning is to go upon the search to-morrow."

"What fools they must have been to let this fellow come ashore!" thought Carne, while he failed to see the wisest way to take it. "Tugwell, you cannot do this with any honour, after we have shown you all the secrets of our enterprise. You know that what we do is of the very highest honour, kind and humane and charitable, though strictly forbidden by a most inhuman Government. How would you like it, if you

were a prisoner in France, to be debarred from all chance of getting any message from your family, your wife, your sweetheart, or your children, from year's end to year's end, and perhaps be dead for months, without their knowing anything about it?"

"Well, sir, I should think it very hard indeed; though if I was dead, I shouldn't know much more about it. But, without reproach to you, I cannot make out altogether that our only business is to carry letters for the prisoners, as now may be in England, from their loving friends to command in their native country. I won't say against you, sir, if you say it is—that is to the outside of all your knowledge. And twenty thousand of them may need letters by the sack. But what use they could make, sir, of cannon as big as I be, and muskets that would kill a man a hundred yards of distance, and bayonets more larger and more sharper than ever I see before, even with the Royal Volunteers—this goes out of all my calculation."

"Daniel, you have expressed your views, which are remarkable—as indeed they always are—with your usual precision. But you have not observed things with equal accuracy. Do you know when a gun is past service?"

"No, sir; I never was a poacher nohow. Squire Darling, that is to say Sir Charles Darling

now, according to a chap on board, he was always so good upon his land, that nobody durst go apoaching."

"I mean a cannon, Dan. They don't poach with cannon yet, though they may come to do it, as the game-laws increase. Do you know when a cannon is unsafe to fire, though it may look as bright as ever, like a worn-out poker? All those things that have frightened you are only meant for ornament. You know that every ancient building ought to have its armoury, as this castle always had, until they were taken away and sold. My intention is to restore it, when I can afford to do so. And having a lot of worn-out weapons offered me for next to nothing, I seized the chance of bringing them. When times are better, and the war is over, I may find time to arrange them. But that is not of much importance. The great point is to secure the delivery of letters from their native land to the brave men here as prisoners. I cannot afford to do that for nothing, though I make no profit out of it. I have so many things to think about, that I scarcely know which to consider first. And after all, what matter to us whether those poor men are allowed to die, and be buried like dogs, without knowledge of their friends? Why should we run the risk of being punished for them?"

“Well, sir, that seems hard doctrine, if I may be allowed to say so, and not like your kind heartedness. Our Government have no right to stop them of their letters.”

“It is a cruel thing. But how are we to help it? The *London Trader* is too large for the purpose, and she is under suspicion now. I tell you everything, Daniel, because I know that you are a true-hearted fellow, and far above all blabbing. I have thought once or twice of obtaining leave to purchase a stout and handy pilot-boat, with her licence and all that transferred to us, and so running to and fro, when needful. The only risk then would be from perils of the sea; and even the pressmen dare not meddle with a pilot-boat. By the by, I have heard that you knocked some of them about. Tugwell, you might have got us all into sad trouble.”

“Was I to think of what I was doing, Squire Carne, when they wanted to make a slave of me? I would serve King George with a good heart, in spite of all that father has said against it. But it must be with a free will, Squire Carne, and not to be tied hand and foot to it. How would you like that yourself, sir?”

“Well, I think I should have done as you did, Dan, if I had been a British sailor. But as to this pilot-boat, I must have a bold and

good seaman to command it. A man who knows the coast, and is not afraid of weather. Of course, we should expect to pay good wages; £3 a week perhaps, and a guinea for every bag of letters landed safe. There are plenty of men who would jump at such a chance, Dan."

"I'll be bound there are, sir. And it is more than I am worth, if you mean offering the place to me. It would suit me wonderful, if I was certain that the job was honest."

"Daniel Tugwell"—Carne spoke with great severity—"I will not lose my temper, for I am sure you mean no insult. But you must be of a very low suspicious nature, and quite unfit for any work of a lofty and unselfish order, if you can imagine that a man in my position, a man of my large sentiments——"

"Oh no, sir, no; it was not at all that"—Dan scarcely knew how to tell what it was—"it was nothing at all of that manner of thinking. I heartily ask your pardon, sir, if it seemed to go in that way."

"Don't do that," replied Carne, "because I can make allowances. I know what a fine nature is, and how it takes alarm at shadows. I am always tender with honest scruples; because I find so many of them in myself. I should not have been pleased with you, if you had accepted my offer—although so advan-

tageous, and full of romantic interest—until you were convinced of its honourable nature. I have no time for argument, and I am sorry that you must not come up to the Castle for supper, because we have an old Springhaven man there, who would tell your father all about you, which you especially wish to avoid. But if you feel inclined for this berth—as you sailors seem to call it—and hesitate through some patriotic doubts, though I cannot understand what they are, I will bring you a document (if you meet me here to-morrow night) from Admiral Sir Charles Darling, which I think will satisfy you.”

“And shall I be allowed to keep it, sir, to show, in case of trouble?”

“Very likely. But I cannot say for certain. Some of those official forms must be returned, others not; all depends upon their rules. Now go and make yourself comfortable. How are you off for money?”

“Plenty, sir, plenty! I must not go where anybody knows me, or to-morrow half the talk at old Springhaven would be about me. Good night, sir, and God bless you.”

CHAPTER IV.

HIS SAVAGE SPIRIT.

AT this time letters came very badly, not only to French prisoners in England, but even to the highest authorities, who had the very best means of getting them. Admiral Darling had often written to his old friend Nelson, but had long been without any tidings from him, through no default on the hero's part. Lord Nelson was almost as prompt with the pen as he was with the sword, but despatches were most irregular and uncertain.

"Here at last we have him!" cried Sir Charles one morning early in December; "and not more than five weeks old, I declare. Dolly, be ready, and call Faith down. Now read it, my dear, for our benefit. Your Godfather writes a most excellent hand, considering that it is his left hand; but my eyes are sore from so much nightwork. Put on my specks, Dolly; I should like to see you in them."

"Am I to read every word, papa, just as it

comes? You know that he generally puts in words that are rather strong for me."

"Nelson never thought or wrote a single word unfit for the nicest young lady. But you may hold up your hand, if you come to any strong expressions, and we shall understand them."

"Then I shall want both hands, as soon as ever we come to the very first Frenchman. But this is what my Godfather says.

"*Victory, off Toulon. Oct. 31st, 1804.*

"MY DEAR LINGO,

"It was only yesterday that I received your letter of July 21st, it went in a Spanish smuggling boat to the coast of Italy and returned again to Spain, not having met any of our ships. And now I hope that you will see me before you see this letter. We are certain to be at war with Spain before another month is out, and I am heartily sorry for it, for I like those fellows better than the French, because they are not such liars. My successor has been appointed, I have reason to hope, and must be far on his way by this time; probably Keith, but I cannot say. Ministers cannot suppose that I want to fly the service, my whole life has proved the contrary; if they refuse I shall most certainly leave in March or April, for

a few months' rest I must have, or else die. My cough is very bad, and my side where I was struck off Cape St. Vincent is very much swelled, at times a lump as large as my fist is brought on by violent coughing, but I hope and believe my lungs are sound. I hope to do good service yet, or else I should not care so much. But if I am in my grave, how can I serve the Country?

“ ‘ You will say, this is not at all like Nelson, to write about nothing but his own poor self; and thank God, Lingo, I can say that you are right; for if ever a man lived for the good of England and destruction of those ’—here Dolly held a hand up—‘ Frenchmen, it is the man in front of this ink-bottle. The Lord has appointed me to that duty, and I shall carry out my orders. Mons. La Touche, who was preached about in France as the man that was to extinguish me, and even in the scurvy English newspapers, but never dared to show his snivelly countenance outside of the inner buoys, is dead of his debosheries, for which I am deeply grieved, as I fully intended to send him to the Devil.

“ ‘ I have been most unlucky for some time now, and to tell the truth I may say always. But I am the last man in the world to grumble—as you, my dear Lingo, can testify. I always do the utmost, with a single mind, and leave the thought of miserable pelf to others, men perhaps

who never saw a shotted cannon fired. You know who made eighty thousand pounds, without having to wipe his pig-tail—dirty things, I am glad they are gone out—but my business is to pay other people's debts, and receive all my credits in the shape of cannon-balls. This is always so, and I should let it pass as usual, except for a blacker trick than I have ever known before. For fear of giving me a single chance of earning twopence, they knew that there was a million and a half of money coming into Cadiz from South America in four Spanish frigates, and instead of leaving me to catch them, they sent out Graham Moore—you know him very well—with orders to pocket everything. This will create a war with Spain, a war begun with robbery on our part, though it must have come soon in any case. For everywhere now—except where I am—that fiend of a Corsican is supreme.

““There is not a sick man in this fleet, unless it is the one inside my coat. That liar La Touche said *he chased me and I ran*. I keep a copy of his letter, which it would have been my duty to make him eat, if he had ventured out again. But he is gone to the lake of brimstone now, and I have the good feeling to forgive him. If my character is not fixed by this time, it is not worth my trouble to put the world right.

Yesterday I took a look into the port within easy reach of their batteries. They lay like a lot of mice holed in a trap, but the weather was too thick to count them. They are certainly nearly twice our number; and if any one was here except poor little Nelson, I believe they would venture out. But my reputation deprives me always of any fair chance to increase it.

“‘And now, my dear Lingo, allow me to enquire how you are getting on with your Coast-defence. I never did attach much importance to their senseless invasion-scheme. The only thing to make it formidable would be some infernal traitor on the coast, some devilish spy who would keep them well informed, and enable them to land where least expected. If there is such a scoundrel, may the Lord Almighty——’ here both Dolly’s hands went up, with the letter in them, and her face turned as white as the paper.

“‘I have often told you, as you may remember, that Springhaven is the very place I should choose, if I were commander of the French flotilla. It would turn the flank of all the inland defences, and no British ship could attack their intrenchments, if once they were snug below the windows of the Hall. But they are not likely to know this, thank God; and if they did, they would have a job to get there. How-

ever it is wise to keep a sharp look-out, for they know very well that I am far away.

“ ‘And now that I have got to your own doors, which I heartily hope to do, perhaps before you see this, let me ask for yourself and all your dear family. Lingo, the longer I live the more I feel that all the true happiness of life is found at home. My glory is very great, and satisfies me, except when it scares the enemy; but I very often feel that I would give it all away for a quiet life among those who love me. Your daughter Faith is a sweet young woman, just what I should wish for a child of mine to be. And Horatia, my godchild, will turn out very well, if a sharp hand is kept over her. But she takes after me, she is daring and ambitious, and requires a firm hand at the helm. Read this to her, with my love, and I dare say she will only laugh at it. If she marries to my liking, she will be down for a good thing in my will, some day. God bless us all. Amen. Amen.

“ ‘Yours affectionately,

“ ‘NELSON AND BRONTE.’ ”

“Take it to heart, my dear; and so must I,” said the Admiral, laughing at the face his daughter made; “your Godfather is a most excellent judge of everybody’s character except his own. But bless me, my dear, why you are

crying ! You silly little thing, I was only in fun. You shall marry to his liking, and be down for the good thing. Look up, and laugh at everybody, my darling. No one laughs so merrily as my pretty Dolly. Why, Faith, what does she mean by this ? ”

To the coaxing voice of her father, and the playful glance that she used to play with, Dolly had not rushed up at all, either with mind, or if that failed, with body, as she always used to do. She hurried towards the door, as if she longed to be away from them ; and then as if she would rather not make any stir about it, sat down and pretended to have caught her dress in something.

“ The only thing is to let her go on as she likes,” Faith said aloud, so that Dolly might hear all of it ; “ I have done all I can, but she believes herself superior. She cannot bear any sort of contradiction, and she expects one to know what she says, without her saying it. There is nothing to be done, but to treat her the same way. If she is left to herself, she may come back to it.”

“ Well, my dear children,” said the Admiral, much alarmed at the prospect of a broil between them, such as he remembered about three years back ; “ I make no pretence to understand your ways. If you were boys, it would be different altogether. But the Almighty has been pleased

to make you girls, and good ones too; in fact there are none to be found better. You have always been bound up with one another and with me; and every one admires all the three of us. So that we must be content if a little thing arises, not to make too much of it, but bear with one another, and defy anybody to come in between us. Kiss one another, my dears, and be off; for I have much correspondence to attend to, besides the great Nelson's, though I took him first, hoping for something sensible. But I have not much to learn about Springhaven, even from his lordship. However, he is a man in ten thousand, and we must not be vexed about any of his crotchets, because he has never had children to talk about; and he gets out of soundings, when he talks about mine. I wish Lady Scudamore was come back. She always agrees with me, and she takes a great load off my shoulders."

The girls laughed at this, as they were meant to do. And they hurried off together, to compare opinions. After all these years of independence, no one should be set up over them. Upon that point, Faith was quite as resolute as Dolly; and her ladyship would have refused to come back, if she had overheard their council. For even in the loftiest feminine nature, lurks a small tincture of jealousy.

But Dolly was now in an evil frame of mind, about many things which she could not explain even to herself, with any satisfaction. Even that harmless and pleasant letter from her great Godfather went amiss with her; and instead of laughing at the words about herself, as with a sound conscience she must have done, she brooded over them, and turned them bitter. No man could have mixed up things as she did, but her mind was nimble. For the moment, she hated patriotism, because Nelson represented it; and feeling how wrong he had been about herself, she felt that he was wrong in everything. The French were fine fellows, and had quite as much right to come here as we had to go and harass them, and a little abatement of English conceit might be a good thing in the long run. Not that she would let them stay here long; that was not to be thought of, and they would not wish it. But a little excitement would be delightful, and a great many things might be changed for the better, such as the treatment of women in this country, which was barbarous, compared to what it was in France. Caryl had told her a great deal about that; and the longer she knew him the more she was convinced of his wisdom and the largeness of his views, so different from the savage spirit of Lord Nelson!

CHAPTER V.

STRANGE CRAFT.

WHILE his love was lapsing from him thus, and from her own true self yet more, the gallant young sailor, whose last prize had been that useful one misfortune, was dwelling continually upon her image, because he had very little else to do. English prisoners in France were treated sometimes very badly, which they took good care to proclaim to Europe; but more often with pity, and good will, and a pleasant study of their modes of thought. For an Englishman then was a strange and ever fresh curiosity to a Frenchman, a specimen of another race of bipeds, with doubts whether marriage could make parentage between them. And a century of intercourse, good will, and admiration, has left us still inquisitive about each other.

Napoleon felt such confidence in his plans for the conquest of England, that if any British officer belonging to the fleet in the narrow seas was taken (which did not happen largely), he

sent for him, upon his arrival at Boulogne, and held a little talk with any who could understand and answer. He was especially pleased at hearing of the capture of Blyth Scudamore (who had robbed him of his beloved *Blonde*), and at once restored Desportes to favour, which he had begun to do before, knowing as well as any man on earth the value of good officers. "Bring your prisoner here to-morrow, at twelve o'clock," was his order; "you have turned the tables upon him well."

Scudamore felt a little nervous tingling, as he passed through the sentries, with his friend before him, into the pavilion of the greatest man in Europe. But the Emperor, being in high good humour, and pleased with the young man's modest face and gentle demeanour, soon set him at his ease, and spoke to him as affably as if he had been his equal. For this man of almost universal mind could win every heart, when he set himself to do it. Scudamore rubbed his eyes, which was a trick of his, as if he could scarcely believe them. Napoleon looked—not insignificant (that was impossible for a man with such a countenance), but mild, and pleasing, and benevolent, as he walked to and fro, for he never could stay still, in the place which was neither a tent, nor a room, but a mixture of the two, and not a happy one. His hat, looped up with a diamond and

quivering with an ostrich feather, was flung anyhow upon the table. But his wonderful eyes were the brightest thing there.

“Ha, ha!” said the Emperor, a very keen judge of faces; “you expected to find me a monster, as I am portrayed by your caricaturists. Your countrymen are not kind to me, except the foremost of them—the great poets. But they will understand me better, by-and-by, when justice prevails, and the blessings of peace, for which I am striving perpetually. But the English nation, if it were allowed a voice, would proclaim me its only true friend and ally. You know that; if you are one of the people, and not of the hateful House of Lords, which engrosses all the army, and the navy. Are you in connection with the House of Lords?”

Scudamore shook his head and smiled. He was anxious to say that he had a cousin, not more than twice removed, now an entire viscount; but Napoleon never encouraged conversation, unless it was his own, or in answer to his questions.

“Very well. Then you can speak the truth. What do they think of all this grand army? Are they aware that, for their own good, it will very soon occupy London? Are they forming themselves to act as my allies, when I have reduced them to reason? Is it now made en-

tirely familiar to their minds, that resistance to me is as hopeless, as it has been from the first unwise? If they would submit, without my crossing, it would save them some disturbance, and me a great expense. I have often hoped to hear of it."

"You will never do that, sire," Scudamore answered, looking calmly and firmly at the deep gray eyes, whose gaze could be met by none of the millions who dread passion; "England will not submit, even if you conquer her."

"It is well said, and doubtless you believe it;" Napoleon continued, with a smile so slight that to smile in reply to it would have been impertinent; "but England is the same as other nations, although the most obstinate among them. When her capital is occupied, her credit ruined, her great lords unable to obtain a dinner, the government (which is not the country) will yield, and the country must follow it. I have heard that the King, and the Court, and the Parliament talk of flying to the north and there remaining, while the navy cuts off our communications, and the inferior classes starve us. Have you heard of any such romance as that?"

"No, sire;" Scudamore scarcely knew what to call him, but adopted this vocative, for want of any better. "I have never heard of any such

plan; and no one would think of packing up, until our fleet has been demolished."

"Your fleet? Yes, yes. How many ships are now parading to and fro, and getting very tired of it?"

"Your Majesty's officers know that best," Scudamore answered with his pleasant open smile. "I have been a prisoner for a month and more, and kept ten miles inland, out of sight of the sea."

"But you have been well-treated, I hope. You have no complaint to make, Monsieur Scutamour? Your name is French, and you speak the language well. We set the fair example in the treatment of brave men."

"Sire, I have been treated," the young officer replied, with a low bow, and eyes full of gratitude, "as a gentleman amongst gentlemen. I might say as a friend among kind friends."

"That is as it should be. It is my wish always. Few of your English fabrications annoy me more than the falsehoods about that. It is most ungenerous, when I do my best, to charge me with strangling brave English captains. But Desportes fought well, before you took his vessel. Is it not so? Speak exactly as you think. I like to hear the enemy's account of every action."

"Captain Desportes, sire, fought like a hero,

and so did all his crew. It was only his mishap in sticking fast upon a sand-bank that enabled us to overpower him."

"And now he has done the like to you. You speak with a brave man's candour. You shall be at liberty to see the sea, Monsieur; for a sailor always pines for that. I will give full instructions to your friend Desportes about you. But one more question, before you go—is there much anxiety in England?"

"Yes, sire, a great deal. But we hope not to allow your Majesty's armament to enter and increase it."

"Ah, we shall see, we shall see how that will be. Now farewell, Captain. Tell Desportes to come to me."

"Well, my dear friend, you have made a good impression," said the French sailor, when he rejoined Scudamore, after a few words with the Master of the State; "all you have to do is to give your word of honour to avoid our lines, and keep away from the beach, and of course to have no communication with your friends upon military subjects. I am allowed to place you for the present at Beutin, a pleasant little hamlet on the Canche, where lives an old relative of mine, a Monsieur Jalais, an ancient widower, with a large house and one servant. I shall be afloat, and shall see but little of you, which is the only

sad part of the business. You will have to report yourself to your landlord, at eight every morning and at eight o'clock at night, and only to leave the house between those hours, and not to wander more than six miles from home. How do these conditions approve themselves to you?"

"I call them very liberal, and very handsome," Scudamore answered, as he well might do. "Two miles' range is all that we allow in England to French officers upon parole. These generous terms are due to your kind friendship."

Before very long, the gentle Scuddy was as happy as a prisoner can expect to be, in his comfortable quarters at Beutin. Through friendly exchanges he had received a loving letter from his mother, with an amiable enclosure, and M. Jalais being far from wealthy, a pleasant arrangement was made between them. Scudamore took all his meals with his host, who could manage sound victuals like an Englishman; and the house-keeper, house-cleaner, and house-feeder (misdescribed by Desportes as a servant, according to our distinctions) being a widow of mark, sat down to consider her cookery upon choice occasions. Then for a long time would prevail a conscientious gravity, and reserve of judgment inwardly, everybody waiting for some other body's sentiments; until the author of the work,

as a female, might no more abide the malignant silence of male reviewers.

Scudamore being very easily amused, as any good-natured young man is, entered with zest into all these doings, and became an authority upon appeal; and being gifted with depth of simplicity as well as high courtesy of taste, was never known to pronounce a wrong decision. That is to say, he decided always in favour of the lady, which has been the majestic course of Justice for centuries, till the appearance of Mrs. —, the lady who should have married the great Home-Ruler.

Thus the wily Scudamore obtained a sitting-room, with the prettiest outlook in the house, or indeed in any house in that part of the world for many leagues of seeking. For the mansion of M. Jalais stood in an elbow of the little river, and one window of this room showed the curve of tidal water widening towards the sea, while the other pleasantly gave eye to the upper reaches of the stream, where an angler of rose-coloured mind might almost hope to hook a trout. The sun glanced down the stream in the morning, and up it to see what he had done before he set; and although M. Jalais' trees were leafless now, they had sleeved their bent arms with green velvety of moss.

Scudamore brought his comfortable chair to

the nook between these windows, and there with a book or two belonging to his host, and the pipe whose silver clouds enthrone the gods of contemplation, many a pleasant hour was passed, seldom invaded by the sounds of war. For the course of the roads and sands of the river kept this happy spot aloof from bad communications. Like many other streams in northern France, the Canche had been deepened, and its mouth improved, not for uses of commerce but of warfare. Veteran soldier, and raw recruit, bugler, baker, and farrier, man who came to fight and man who came to write about it, all had been turned into navvies, diggers, drivers of piles, or of horses, or wheel-barrows, by the man who turned everybody into his own teetotum. The Providence that guides the world showed mercy in sending that engine of destruction, before there was a Railway for him to run upon.

Now Scudamore being of a different sort, and therefore having pleased Napoleon (who detested any one at all of his own pattern), might have been very well contented here, and certainly must have been so, if he had been without those two windows. Many a bird has lost his nest, and his eggs, and his mate, and even his own tail, by cocking his eyes to the right and left, when he should have drawn their shutters up. And why? Because the brilliance of his too

projecting eyes has twinkled through the leaves upon the narrow oblong of the pupils of a spotty-eyed cat going stealthily under the comb of the hedge, with her stomach wired in, and her spinal column fluted, to look like a wrinkled blackthorn snag. But still worse is it for that poor thrush, or lintie, or robin, or warbler-wren, if he flutters in his bosom when he spies that cat, and sets up his feathers, and begins to hop about, making a sad little chirp to his mate, and appealing to the sky to protect him and his family.

Blyth Scudamore's case was a mixture of those two. It would have been better for his comfort if he had shut his eyes; but having opened them, he should have stayed where he was, without any fluttering. However, he acted for the best; and when a man does that, can those who never do so find a word to say against him?

According to the best of his recollection, which was generally near the mark, it was upon Christmas-eve A.D. 1804 that his curiosity was first aroused. He had made up his room to look a little bit like home, with a few sprigs of holly, and a sheaf of laurel, not placed daintily as a lady dresses them, but as sprightly as a man can make them look, and as bright as a captive Christmas could expect. The decorator shed a little sigh—if that expression may be pardoned

by analogy, for he certainly neither fetched nor heaved it—and then he lit his pipe to reflect upon home-blessings, and consider the free world outside, in which he had very little share at present.

Mild blue eyes, such as this young man possessed, are often short-sighted at a moderate range, and would be fitted up with glasses in these artificial times, and yet at long distance they are most efficient, and can make out objects that would puzzle keener organs. And so it was that Scudamore, with the sinking sun to help him, descried at a long distance down the tidal reach a peaceful-looking boat, which made his heart beat faster. For a sailor's glance assured him that she was English—English in her rig and the stiff cut of her canvas, and in all those points of character to a seaman so distinctive, which apprise him of his kindred through the length of air and water, as clearly as we landsmen know a man from a woman at the measure of a furlong, or a quarter of a mile. He perceived that it was an English pilot-boat, and that she was standing towards him. At first his heart fluttered with a warm idea, that there must be good news for him on board that boat. Perhaps without his knowledge, an exchange of prisoners might have been agreed upon; and what a grand Christmas-box for him, if the

order for his release was there! But another thought showed him the absurdity of this hope, for orders of release do not come so. Nevertheless he watched that boat, with interest and wonder.

Presently, just as the sun was setting, and shadows crossed the water, the sail (which had been gleaming like a candle-flame, against the haze and upon the glaze) flickered and fell, and the bows swung round, and her figure was drawn upon the tideway. She was now within half-a-mile of M. Jalais' house, and Scudamore, though longing for a spy-glass, was able to make out a good deal without one. He saw that she was an English pilot-boat, undecked but fitted with a cuddy forward, rigged lugger-wise, and built for speed, yet fit to encounter almost any channel-surges. She was light in the water, and bore little except ballast. He could not be sure at that distance, but he thought that the sailors must be Englishmen, especially the man at the helm, who was beyond reasonable doubt the captain.

Then two long sweeps were manned amidship, with two sturdy fellows to tug at each; and the quiet evening air led through the soft rehearsal of the water to its banks the creak of tough ash tholepins, and the groan of gunwale, and the splash of oars, and then a sound of human staple,

such as is accepted by the civilized world as our national diapason.

The captive Scuddy, who observed all this, was thoroughly puzzled at that last turn. Though the craft was visibly English, the crew might still have been doubtful, if they had held their tongues, or kept them in submission. But that word stamped them, or at any rate the one who had been struck in the breast by the heavy timber, as of genuine British birth. Yet there was no sign that these men were prisoners, or acting by compulsion. No French boat was near them, no batteries there commanded their course, and the pilot-boat carried no prize-crew to direct reluctant labours. At the mouth of the river was a floating bridge, for the use of the forces on either side, and no boat could have passed it without permission. Therefore these could be no venturesome Britons, spying out the quarters of the enemy; either they must have been allowed to pass for some special purpose, under flag of truce, or else they were traitors, in league with the French, and despatched upon some dark errand.

In a few minutes, as the evening dusk began to deepen round her, the mysterious little craft disappeared in a hollow of the uplands on the other side of the water, where a narrow creek or inlet—such as is called a “pill” in some parts

of England—formed a sheltered landing-place, overhung with clustering trees. Then Scudamore rose, and filled another pipe, to meditate upon this strange affair. “I am justly forbidden,” he thought, as it grew dark, “to visit the camp, or endeavour to learn anything done by the army of invasion. And I have pledged myself to that effect. But this is a different case altogether. When Englishmen come here as traitors to their Country, and in a place well within my range, my duty is to learn the meaning of it; and if I find treachery of importance working, then I must consider about my parole, and probably withdraw it. That would be a terrible blow to me, because I should certainly be sent far inland, and kept in a French prison perhaps for years, with little chance of hearing from my friends again. And then she would give me up as lost, that faithful darling, who has put aside all her bright prospects for my sake. How I wish I had never seen that boat; and I thought it was coming to bring me such good news! I am bound to give them one day’s grace, for they might not know where to find me at once, and to-night I could not get near them, without overstaying my time to be indoors. But if I hear nothing to-morrow, and see nothing, I must go round so as not to be seen, and learn something about her the very next morning.”

Hearing nothing and seeing no more, he spent an uncomfortable Christmas-day, disappointing his host and kind Madame Fropot, who had done all they knew to enliven him with a genuine English plum-pudding. And the next day, with a light foot but a rather heavy heart, he made the long round by the bridge up-stream, and examined the creek which the English boat had entered. He approached the place very cautiously, knowing that if his suspicions were correct they might be confirmed too decisively, and his countrymen if they had fire-arms would give him a warm reception. However there was no living creature to be seen, except a poor terrified ox, who had escaped from the slaughter-houses of the distant camp, and hoped for a little rest in this dark thicket. He was worn out with his long flight, and sadly wounded, for many men had shot at him, when he desired to save his life; and although his mouth was little more than the length of his tail from water, there he lay gasping with his lips stretched out, and his dry tongue quivering between his yellow teeth, and the only moisture he could get was running out of his mouth, instead of into it.

Scudamore, seeing that the coast was clear, and no enemy in chase of this poor creature, immediately filled his hat with fresh water—for the tide was out now, and the residue was

sweet—and speaking very gently in the English language, for he saw that he must have been hard-shouted at in French, was allowed without any more disturbance of the system to supply a little glad refreshment. The sorely afflicted animal licked his lips, and looked up for another hatful.

Captain Scuddy deserved a new hat for this—though very few Englishmen would not have done the like—and in the end he got it; though he must have caught a bad cold, if he had gone without a hat till then.

Pursuing his search, with grateful eyes pursuing him, he soon discovered where the boat had grounded, by the impress of her keel and fore-foot on the stiff retentive mud. He could even see where a hawser had been made fast to a staunch old trunk, and where the soil had been prodded with a pole in pushing her off at the turn of tide. Also deep tracks of some very large hound, or wolf, or unknown quadruped, in various places, scarred the bank. And these marks were so fresh and bright, that they must have been made within the last few hours, probably when the last ebb began. If so, the mysterious craft had spent the whole of Christmas-day in that snug berth; and he blamed himself for permitting his host's festivities to detain him. Then he took a few bearings to

mark the spot, and fed the poor crippled ox with all the herbage he could gather, resolving to come with a rope to-morrow, and lead him home, if possible, as a Christmas present to M. Jalais.

CHAPTER VI.

KIND ENQUIRIES.

THAT notable year, and signal mark in all the great annals of England, the year 1805, began with gloom and great depression. Food was scarce, and so was money; wars, and rumours of worse than war, discontent of men who owed it to their birth and country to stand fast, and trust in God, and vigorously defy the Devil, sinkings even of strong hearts, and quailing of spirits that had never quailed before, passionate outcry for peace without honour, and even without safety, savage murmurings at wise measures and at the burdens that must be borne—none but those who lived through all these troubles could count half of them. If such came now, would the body of the nation strive to stand against them, or fall in the dust, and be kicked and trampled, sputtering namby-pamby? Britannia now is always wrong, in the opinion of her wisest sons, if she dares to defend herself even against weak enemies; what then would her crime be,

if she buckled her corselet against the world ! To prostitute their mother is the philanthropy of Communists.

But while the anxious people who had no belief in foreigners, were watching by the dark waves, or at the twilight window trembling (if ever a shooting-star drew train, like a distant rocket-signal), or in their sleepy beds scared, and jumping up, if a bladder burst upon a jam-pot—no one attempted to ridicule them, and no public journal pronounced that the true British flag was the white feather. It has been left for times, when the power of England is tenfold what it was then, and her duties a hundredfold, to tell us that sooner than use the one for the proper discharge of the other, we must break it up and let them go to pot upon it, for fear of hurting somebody that stuck us in the back.

But who of a right mind knows not this, and who with a wrong one will heed it? The only point is that the commonest truisms come upon utterance sometimes, and take didactic form too late ; even as we shout to our comrade prone, and beginning to rub his poor nose—"look out !" And this is what everybody did with one accord, when he was down upon his luck—which is far more momentous than his nose to any man—in the case of Rector Twemlow.

That gentleman now had good reason for

being in less than his usual cheer and comfort. Everything around him was uneasy, and everybody seemed to look at him, instead of looking up to him, as the manner used to be. This was enough to make him feel unlike himself; for although he was resolute in his way, and could manage to have it with most people, he was not of that iron style which takes the world as wax to write upon. Mr. Twemlow liked to heave his text at the people of his parish on Sunday, and to have his joke with them on Monday; as the fire that has burned a man makes the kettle sing to comfort him. And all who met him throughout the week were pleased with him doubly, when they remembered his faithfulness in the pulpit.

But now he did his duty softly, as if some of it had been done to him; and if anybody thanked him for a fine discourse, he never endeavoured to let him have it all again. So far was he gone from his natural state, that he would rather hear nothing about himself, than be praised enough to demand reply; and this shows a world-wide depression to have arrived in the latitude of a British waistcoat. However he went through his work, as a Briton always does, until he hangs himself; and he tried to try some of the higher consolation, which he knew so well how to administer to others.

Those who do not understand the difference of this, might have been inclined to blame him ; but all who have seen a clever dentist with the toothache are aware that his knowledge adds acuteness to the pain. Mr. Twemlow had borne great troubles well, and been cheerful even under long suspense ; but now a disappointment close at home, and the grief of beholding his last hopes fade, were embittered by mystery and dark suspicions. In despair at last of recovering his son, he had fastened upon his only daughter the interest of his declining life ; and now he was vexed with misgivings about her, which varied as frequently as she did. It was very unpleasant to lose the chance of having a grandchild capable of rocking in a silver cradle ; but that was a trifle compared with the prospect of having no grandchild at all, and perhaps not even a child to close his eyes. And even his wife, of long habit and fair harmony, from whom he had never kept any secret—frightful as might be the cost to his honour—even Mrs. Twemlow shook her head sometimes, when the arrangement of her hair permitted it, and doubted whether any of the Carne-castle Carnes would have borne with such indignity.

“Prosecute him ; prosecute ;” this good lady always said ; “you ought to have been a magistrate, Joshua ; the first magistrate in the Bible

was that ; and then you would have known how to do things. But because you would have to go to Sir Charles Darling—whose *Sir* can never put him on the level of the Carnes—you have some right feeling against taking out a summons. In that I agree with you ; it would be very dreadful here. But in London he might be punished, I am sure ; and I know a great deal about the law, for I never had any one connected with me who was not a magistrate ; the Lord Mayor has a Court of his own for trying the corporation under the chair ; and if this was put properly before him by a man like Mr. Furkettle, upon the understanding that he should not be paid unless he won his case, I am sure the result would be three years' imprisonment. By that time, he would have worn out his coat with jailer's keys upon it, which first attracted our poor Eliza ; or if he was not allowed to wear it, it would go out of fashion, and be harmless. No one need know a word about it here, for Captain Stubbard would oblige us gladly, by cutting it out of the London papers. My dear, you have nobody ill in the parish ; I will put up your things, and see you off to-morrow. We will dine late on Friday, to suit the coach ; and you will be quite fit for Sunday work again, if you keep up your legs on a chair all Saturday."

"If ever I saw a straightforward man," Mr.

Twemlow used to answer, "it was poor Percival Shargeloes. He is gone to a better world, my dear. And if he continued to be amenable to law, this is not a criminal, but a civil case."

"A nice case of civility, Joshua! But you always stand up for your sex. Does the coach take people to a better world? A stout gentleman, like him, was seen inside the coach, muffled up in a cravat of three colours, and eating at frequent intervals."

"The very thing poor Percival never did. That disposes to my mind of that foolish story. My dear, when all truth comes to light, you will do justice to his memory."

"Yes, I dare say. But I should like to do it now. If you entertain any dark ideas, it is your duty to investigate them. Also to let me share them, Joshua; as I have every right to do."

This was just what the rector could not do; otherwise he might have been far more happy. Remembering that last conversation with his prospective son-in-law, and the poor man's declaration that the suspicious matter at the Castle ought to be thoroughly searched out at once, he nourished a dark suspicion, which he feared to impart to his better-half, the aunt of the person suspected. But the longer he concealed it, the more unbearable grew this

mystery to a candid nature, until he was compelled, in self-defence, to allow it some sort of outlet. "I will speak to the fellow myself," he said, heartily disliking the young man now, "and judge from his manner what next I ought to do."

This resolution gave him comfort, much as he hated any interview with Carne, who treated him generally with cold contempt. And, like most people who have formed a decision for the easing of the conscience, he accepted very patiently the obstacles encountered. In the first place, Carne was away upon business; then he was laid up with a heavy cold; then he was much too hard at work (after losing so much time) to be able to visit Springhaven; and to seek him in his ruins was most unsafe, even if one liked to do it. For now it was said that two gigantic dogs, as big as a bull and as fierce as a tiger, roved among the ruins all day, and being always famished, would devour in two minutes any tempting stranger with a bit of flesh or fat on him. The rector patting his gaiters felt that instead of a pastor he might become a very sweet repast to them, and his delicacy was renewed and deepened. He was bound to wait until his nephew appeared at least inside his parish.

Therefore the time of year was come almost to the middle of February, when Mr. Twemlow

at last obtained the chance he required and dreaded. He heard that his nephew had been seen that day to put up his horse in the village, and would probably take the homeward road, as soon as it grew too dark to read. So he got through his own work (consisting chiefly of newspaper, dinner, and a cool clay-pipe, to equalise mind with matter), and having thus escaped the ladies, off he set by the lobby-door, carrying a good thick stick. As the tide would be up, and only deep sand left for the heavy track of the traveller, he chose the inland way across the lower part of the Admiral's grounds, leading to the village by a narrow plank-bridge across the little stream among some trees. Here were banks of earth and thicket, shadowy dells where the primrose grew, and the cuckoo-pint, and wood-sorrel, and perhaps in summer the glow-worm breathed her mossy gleam under the blackberries.

And here parson Twemlow was astonished, though he had promised himself to be surprised no more, after all he had been through lately. As he turned a sharp corner by an ivied tree, a breathless young woman ran into his arms.

"Oh!" cried the rector, for he was walking briskly, with a well-nourished part of his system forward; "oh, I hope you have not hurt yourself. No doubt it was my fault. Why, Dolly!

What a hurry you are in! And all alone—all alone, almost after dark!”

“To be sure, and that makes me in such a hurry;” Miss Dolly was in sad confusion. “But I suppose I am safe in my father’s own grounds.”

“From everybody, except yourself, my dear,” Mr. Twemlow replied severely. “Is your father aware, does your sister know, that you are at this distance from the house after dark, and wholly without a companion?”

“It is not after dark, Mr. Twemlow; although it is getting darker than I meant it to be. I beg your pardon for terrifying you. I hope you will meet with no other perils! Good night! Or at least I mean, good afternoon!”

“The brazen creature!” thought Mr. Twemlow, as the girl without another word disappeared. “Not even to offer me any excuse! But I suppose she had no fib handy. She will come to no good, I am very much afraid. Maria told me that she was getting very wilful; but I had no idea that it was quite so bad as this. I am sorry for poor Scudamore, who thinks her such an angel. I wonder if Carne is at the bottom of this? There is nothing too bad for that dark young man. I shall ascertain at any rate whether he is in the village. But unless I look sharp, I shall be too late to meet him. Oh, I can’t walk so fast as I did ten years ago.”

Inpelled by duty to put best leg foremost, and taking a short cut above the village, he came out upon the lane leading towards the castle, some half-mile or so beyond the last house of Springhaven. Here he waited to recover breath, and prepare for what he meant to say, and he was sorry to perceive that light would fail him for strict observation of his nephew's face. But he chose the most open spot he could find, where the hedges were low, and nothing overhung the road.

Presently he heard the sound of hoofs approaching leisurely up the hill, and could see from his resting-place that Carne was coming, sitting loosely and wearily on his high black horse. Then the rector, to cut short an unpleasant business, stood boldly forth and hailed him.

"No time for anything now," shouted Carne; "too late already. Do you want my money? You are come to the wrong man for that; but the right one, I can tell you, for a bullet."

"Caryl, it is I, your Uncle Twemlow, or at any rate the husband of your aunt. Put up your pistol, and speak to me a minute. I have something important to say to you. And I never can find you at the Castle."

"Then be quick, sir, if you please;" Carne had never condescended to call this gentleman

his uncle. "I have little time to spare. Out with it."

"You were riding very slowly for a man in a hurry;" said the rector, annoyed at his roughness. "But I will not keep you long, young man. For some good reasons of your own, you have made a point of avoiding us, your nearest relatives in this country, and to whom you addressed yourself before you landed, in a manner far more becoming. Have I ever pressed my attentions upon you?"

"No, I confess that you have not done that. You perceived, as a gentleman, how little there was in common, between the son of a devoted Catholic, and a heretic clergyman."

"That is one way to put it;" Mr. Twemlow answered, smiling in spite of his anger at being called a heretic; "but I was not aware that you had strong religious views. However that may be, we should have many things in common, as Englishmen, at a time like this. But what I came to speak of is not that. We can still continue to get on without you; although we would rather have met with friendly feeling, and candour, as becomes relatives. But little as you know of us, you must be well aware that your cousin Eliza was engaged to be married to a gentleman from London, Mr. Percival Sharge-loes, and that he——"

"I am sure I wish her all happiness, and congratulate you, my dear sir, as well as my Aunt Maria. I shall call, as soon as possible, to offer my best wishes. It was very kind of you to tell me. Good night, sir, good night! There is a shower coming."

"But," exclaimed the rector, nonplussed for the moment by this view of the subject, yet standing square before the horse; "Shargeloes has disappeared! What have you done with him?"

Carne looked at his excellent uncle, as if he had much doubt about his sanity. "Try to explain yourself, my dear sir. Try to connect your ideas," he said, "and offer me the benefit another time. My horse is impatient; he may strike you with his foot."

"If he does, I shall strike him upon the head," Mr. Twemlow replied, with his heavy stick ready. "It will be better for you to hear me out. Otherwise I shall procure a search-warrant, and myself examine your ruins, of which I know every crick and cranny. And your Aunt Maria shall come with me, who knows every stone even better than you do. That would be a very different thing from an overhauling by Captain Stubbard. I think we should find a good many barrels, and bales, that had paid no duty."

“My dear uncle,” cried Carne, with more affection than he ever yet had shown, “that is no concern of yours; you have no connection with the Revenue; and I am sure that Aunt Maria would be loth to help in pulling down the family once more. But do as you please. I am accustomed to ill fortune. Only I should like to know what this is, about poor cousin Eliza. If any man has wronged her, leave the case to me. You have no son now, and the honour of the family shall not suffer in my hands. I will throw up everything, busy as I am, to make such a rascal bite the dust. And Eliza so proud, and so upright herself!”

“Caryl,” said his uncle, moved more than he liked to show by this fine feeling, “you know more, I see, than you liked to show at first, doubtless through good-will to us. Your dear aunt wished to keep the matter quiet, for the sake of poor Eliza, and her future chances. But I said—No. Let us have it all out. If there is wrong, we have suffered, not done it. Concealment is odious to every honest mind.”

“Deeply, deeply odious. Upon that point, there can be no two opinions”—he forgets his barrels, thought the rector—“but surely this man, whatever his name is—Charleygoes must have been hiding from you something in his own history. Probably he had a wife already.

City men often do that when young, and then put their wives somewhere when they get rich, and pay visits, and even give dinners, as if they were bachelors to be sought after. Was Charley-goes that sort of man?"

"His name is 'Shargeloes,' a name well-known, as I am assured, in the highest quarters. And he certainly was not sought after by us, but came to me with an important question bearing on ichthyology. He may be a wanderer, as you suggest, and as all the ladies seem to think. But my firm belief is to the contrary. And my reason for asking you about him is a very clear one. He had met you twice, and felt interest in you, as a future member of our family. You had never invited him to the Castle; and the last intention he expressed in my hearing was to call upon you, uninvited. Has he met with an accident in your cellars? Or have your dogs devoured him? He carried a good deal of flesh, in spite of all he could do to the contrary; and any man naturally might endeavour to hush up such an incident. Tell me the truth, Caryl. And we will try to meet it."

"My two dogs (who would never eat any one, though they might pull down a stranger, and perhaps pretend to bite him) arrived here the first week in January. When did Charley-goes disappear? I am not up in dates; but it

must have been weeks and weeks before that time. And I must have heard of it, if it had happened. I may give you my honour that Orso and Leo have not eaten Charleygoes."

"You speak too lightly of a man in high position, who would have been Lord Mayor of London, if he had never come to Springhaven. But living or dead, he shall never be that now. Can you answer me, in the same straightfoward manner, as to an accident in your cellars; which, as a gentleman upon a private tour, he had clearly no right to intrude upon?"

"I can answer you quite as clearly. Nothing accidental has happened in my cellars. You may come and see them, if you have any doubt about it. And you need not apply for a search-warrant."

"God forbid, my dear fellow," cried the uncle, "that I should intrude upon any little matters of delicacy, such as are apt to arise between artificial laws and gentlemen who happen to live near the sea, and to have large places that require restoring. I shall go home with a lighter heart. There is nothing in this world that brings the comfort of straightforwardness."

CHAPTER VII.

TIME AND PLACE.

IN a matter like that French invasion, which had been threatened for such a time, and kept so long impending, "the cry of wolf" grows stale at last, and then the real danger comes. Napoleon had reckoned upon this, as he always did upon everything, and for that good reason he had not grudged the time devoted to his home affairs. These being settled according to his will, and mob turned into pomp, as gaily as grub turns into butterfly, a strong desire for a little more glory arose in his mighty but ill-regulated mind. If he could only conquer England, or even without that fetch her down on her knees, and make her lick her own dust off the feet of Frenchmen, from that day forth all the nations of the earth must bow down before him. Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, though they might have had the power, never would have plucked the spirit up, to resist him hand

in hand, any more than skittle-pins can back one another up against the well-aimed ball.

The balance of to-be or not-to-be, as concerned our Country (which many now despise, as the mother of such disloyal children) after all that long suspension, hung in the clouds of that great year; and a very cloudy year it was, and thick with storms on land and sea. Storm was what the Frenchmen longed for, to disperse the British ships; though storm made many an Englishman, pulling up the counterpane as the window rattled, thank the Father of the weather for keeping the enemy ashore and in a fright. But the greatest peril of all would be in the case of fog succeeding storm, when the mighty flotilla might sweep across, before our ships could resume blockade, or even a frigate intercept.

One of the strangest points in all this period of wonders, to us who after the event are wise, is that even far-sighted Nelson and his watchful colleagues, seem to have had no inkling of the enemy's main project. Nelson believed Napoleon to be especially intent on Egypt; Collingwood expected a sudden dash on Ireland; others were sure that his object was Jamaica; and many maintained that he would step ashore in India. And these last came nearest to the mark upon the whole; for a great historian (who declares,

like Caryl Carne, that a French invasion is a blessing to any country) shows that, for at least a month in the spring of 1805, his hero was revolving a mighty scheme, for robbing poor England of blissful ravage, and transferring it to India.

However, the master of the world—as he was called already, and meant soon to be—suddenly returned to his earlier design, and fixed the vast power of his mind upon it. He pushed with new vigour his preparations, which had been slackened awhile, he added 30,000 well-trained soldiers to his force already so enormous, and he breathed the quick spirit of enterprise into the mighty mass he moved. Then, to clear off all obstacles, and ensure clear speed of passage, he sent sharp orders to his Admirals to elude and delude the British fleets, and resolved to enhance that delusion by his own brief absence from the scene.

Meanwhile a man of no importance to the world, and of very moderate ambition, was passing a pleasant time in a quiet spot, content to be scarcely a spectator even of the drama in rehearsal around him. Scudamore still abode with M. Jalais, and had won his hearty friendship, as well as the warm goodwill of that important personage Madame Fropot. Neither of these could believe at first that any Englishman

was kind and gentle, playful in manner, and light-hearted, easily pleased, and therefore truly pleasing. But as soon as they saw the poor wounded ox brought home by a ford, and settled happily in the orchard, and received him as a free gift from their guest, national prejudices dwindled very fast, and domestic good feeling grew faster. M. Jalais, although a sound Frenchman, hated the Empire and all that led up to it; and as for Madame Fropot, her choicest piece of cookery might turn into cinders, if anybody mentioned conscription in her presence. For she had lost her only son, the entire hope of her old days, as well as her only daughter's lover, in that lottery of murder.

Nine out of ten of the people in the village were of the same way of thinking. A great army cannot be quartered anywhere, even for a week, without scattering brands of ill-will all around it. The swagger of the troops, their warlike airs, and loud contempt of the undrilled swain, the dash of a coin on the counter when they deign to pay for anything, the insolent wink at every modest girl, and the coarse joke running along apish mouths—even before dark crime begins, native antipathy is sown and thrives. And now for nearly four years, this coast had never been free from the arrogant strut, the clanking spur, and the loud guffaw, which in every age and

every clime, have been considered the stamp of valour by ploughboys at the paps of Bellona. So weary was the neighbourhood of this race, new conscripts always keeping up the pest, that even the good M. Jalais longed to hear that the armament lay at the bottom of the Channel. And Scudamore would have been followed by the good wishes of every house in the village, if he had lifted his hat and said, "Good-bye, my dear friends ; I am breaking my parole."

For this, though encouraged by the popular voice, he was not sufficiently liberal ; but stayed within bounds of space and time, more carefully than if he had been watched. Captain Desportes, who had been in every way a true friend to him, came to see him now and then, being now in command of a division of the prâmes, and naturally anxious for the signal to unmoor. Much discourse was held, without brag on either side, but with equal certainty on both sides of success. And in one of these talks, the Englishman in the simplest manner told the Frenchman all that he had seen on Christmas-eve, and his own suspicions about it.

"Understand this well," continued Scudamore ; "if I discover any treachery on the part of my own countrymen, I shall not be able to stop here, on the terms that have been allowed me. Whatever the plan may be, I should feel as

if I were a party to it, if I accepted my free range, and swallowed my suspicions. With your proceedings I do not meddle, according to fair compact, and the liberal conditions offered. But to see my own countrymen playing my country false, is more than I could stand. You know more of such things than I do. But if you were an Englishman, could you endure to stand by, and hide treachery, for the sake of your own comfort ? ”

“ Beyond a doubt, no,” Captain Desportes answered, spreading his hands with decision ; “ in such a case I should throw up my parole. But a mere suspicion does not justify an act so ungracious to the Commander, and personally so unkind to me. I hoped that bright eyes might persuade you to forego hard knocks, and wear none but gentle chains among us. Nature intended you for a Frenchman. You have the gay heart, and the easy manner, and the grand philosophy of our great nation. Your name is Blyth, and I know what that intends.”

Scudamore blushed, for he knew that Madame Fropot was doing her best to commit him with a lovely young lady not far off, who had felt a tender interest in the cheerful English captive. But after trying to express once more the deep gratitude he felt towards those who had been so wonderfully kind and friendly, he asked with a

smile and a little sigh behind it, what he must do, if compelled by duty to resign his present privileges.

“My faith! I scarcely know,” replied Desportes; “I have never had such a case before. But I think you must give me a written notice, signed by yourself and by M. Jalais, and allow a week to pass, and then, unless you have heard from me, present yourself to the Commandant of the nearest post, which must be, I suppose, at Etaples. Rather a rough man he is; and I fear you will have reason for regret. The duty will then remain with him. But I beg you, my dear friend, to continue as you are. Tush, it is nothing but some smuggler’s work.”

Scudamore hoped that he might be right, and for some little time was not disturbed by any appearance to the contrary. But early in the afternoon one day, when the month of March was near its close, he left his books for a little fresh air, and strolled into the orchard, where his friend, the ox, was dwelling. This worthy animal, endowed with a virtue denied to none except the human race, approached him lovingly, and begged to draw attention to the gratifying difference betwixt wounds and scars. He offered his broad brow to the hand, and his charitable ears to be tickled, and breathed a quick issue of good feeling and fine feeding, from the sensitive tucks

of his nostrils ; as a large-hearted smoker makes the air go up with gratitude.

But as a burnt child dreads the fire, the seriously perforated animal kept one eye vigilant of the northern aspect, and the other studious of the south. And the gentle Scuddy (who was finding all things happy, which is the only way to make them so) was startled by a sharp jerk of his dear friend's head. Following the clue of gaze, there he saw coming up the river with a rollicking self-trust, a craft uncommonly like that craft, which had mounted every sort of rig, and flag, and carried every kind of crew, in his many dreams about her. This made him run back to his room at once, not only in fear of being seen upon the bank, but also that he might command a better view, with the help of his landlord's old spy-glass.

Using this, which he had cleaned from the dust of ages, he could clearly see the faces of the men on board. Of these there were six, of whom five at least were Englishmen, or of English breed. As the pilot-boat drew nearer, and the sunlight fell upon her, to his great surprise he became convinced that the young man at the tiller was Dan Tugwell, the son of the captain of Springhaven. Four of the others were unknown to him, though he fancied that he had seen two of them before, but could not remember when

or where. But he watched with special interest the tall man lounging against the little door of the cuddy in the bows, whose profile only was presented to him. Then the boat canted round towards the entrance of the creek, and having his glass upon the full face of the man, he recognised him as Caryle Carne, whom he had met more than once at Springhaven.

His darkest suspicions were at once redoubled, and a gush of latent jealousy was added to them. In happier days when he was near his lady-love, some whispers had reached him about this fellow, whose countenance had always been repulsive to him, arrogant, moody, and mysterious. His good mother also, though most careful not to harass him, had mentioned that Carne in her latest letter, and by no means in a manner to remove his old misgivings. As a matter now of duty to his Country and himself, the young sailor resolved to discover, at any risk, what traitorous scheme had brought this dark man over here.

To escape the long circuit by the upper bridge, he had obtained leave through M. Jalais, to use an old boat which was kept in a bend of the river about a mile above the house. And now, after seeing that English boat make for the creek where she had been berthed on Christmas Eve, he begged Madame Fropot to tell his host not to be uneasy about him, and taking no

weapon but a ground-ash stick, set forth to play spy upon traitors. As surely as one foot came after the other, he knew that every step was towards his grave, if he made a mistake or even met bad luck; but he twirled his light stick in his broad brown hand, and gently invaded the French trees around with an old English song, of the days when still an Englishman could compose a song. But this made him think of that old-fashioned place Springhaven; and sadness fell upon him, that the son of its captain should be a traitor.

Instead of pulling across the river, to avoid the splash of oars, he sculled with a single oar astern, not standing up and wallowing in the boat, but sitting and cutting the figure of 8 with less noise than a skater makes. The tide being just at slack water, this gave him quite as much way as he wanted, and he steered into a little bight of the southern bank, and made fast to a stump, and looked about; for he durst not approach the creek, until the light should fade, and the men have stowed tackle and begun to feed. The vale of the stream afforded shelter to a very decent company of trees, which could not have put up with the tyranny of the west wind upon the bare brow of the coast. Most of these trees stood back a little from the margin of high tide, reluctant to see themselves in the

water, for fear of the fate of Narcissus. But where that clandestine boat had glided into gloom and grayness, a fosse of Nature's digging, deeply lined with wood and thicket, offered snug harbourage to craft and fraud.

Scudamore had taken care to learn the ups and downs of the riverside ere this, and knew them now as well as a native; for he had paid many visits to the wounded ox, whom he could not lead home quite as soon as he had hoped, and he had found a firm place of the little river, easy to cross when the tide was out. With the help of this knowledge he made his way to the creek, without much risk of being observed, and then as he came to the crest of the thicket, he lay down and watched the interlopers.

There was the boat, now imbedded in the mud, for the little creek was nearly dry by this time. Her crew had all landed and kindled a fire, over which hung a kettle full of something good, which they seemed to regard with tender interest; while upon a grassy slope some few yards to the right, a trooper's horse was tethered. Carne was not with them, but had crossed the creek, as the marks of his boots in the mud declared; and creeping some little way along the thicket, Scudamore descried him walking to and fro impatiently in a little hollow place, where the sailors could not see him. This was on

Scudamore's side of the creek, and scarcely fifty yards below him. "He is waiting for an interview with somebody," thought Scuddy; "if I could only get down to that little shanty, perhaps I should hear some fine treason. The wind is the right way to bring me every word he says."

Keeping in shelter, when the traitor walked towards him, and stealing on silently when his back was turned, the young sailor managed to ensconce himself unseen in the rough little wattle-shed, made by his own hands for the shelter of his patient, when a snowstorm had visited the valley of the Canche last winter. Nothing could be better fitted for his present purpose; inasmuch as his lurking-place could scarcely be descried from below, being sheltered by two large trees and a screen of drooping ivy, betwixt and below which it looked no more than a casual meeting of bushes; while on the other hand the open space beneath it was curved like a human ear, to catch the voice and forward it.

While Scudamore was waiting here, and keenly watching everything, the light began to falter, and the latest gleam of sunset trembled with the breath of Spring among the buds and catkins. But the tall man continued his long firm stride, as if the watch in his pocket were

the only thing worth heeding. Until, as the shadows lost their lines, and flowed into the general depth, Carne sprang forward, and a horse and rider burst into the silence of the grass, and moss, and trees.

Carne made a low obeisance, retired a little, and stood hat in hand, until it should please the other man to speak. And Scudamore saw, with a start of surprise, that the other man was Napoleon.

This great man appeared, to the mild English eyes that were watching him so intently, of a very different mood and visage, from those of their last view of him. Then the face, which combined the beauty of Athens with the strength of Rome, was calm, and gentle, and even sweet, with the rare indulgence of a kindly turn. But now, though not disturbed with wrath, nor troubled by disappointment, that face (which had helped to make his fortune, more than any woman's had ever done for her) was cast, even if the mould could be the same, in a very different metal. Stern force, and triumphant vigour, shone in every lineament, and the hard bright eyes were intent with purpose that would have no denial.

Refusing Carne's aid, he remained on his horse, and stroked his mane for a moment, for he loved any creature that served him well, and

was tender of heart when he could afford it ; which added to his power with mankind.

“ Are all your men well out of ear-shot ? ” he asked ; and receiving assurance from Carne, went on. “ Now you will be satisfied at length. You have long been impatient. It is useless to deny it. All is arranged, and all comes to a head, within three months, and perhaps within two. Only four men will know it, besides yourself ; and three of those four are commanders of my fleet. A short time will be occupied in misleading those British ships that beleaguer us ; then we concentrate ours, and command the Channel ; if only for three days, that will be enough. I depart for Italy, in three days or in four, to increase the security of the enemy. But I shall return, without a word to any one, and as fast as horses can lay belly to the ground, when I hear that our ships have broken out. I shall command the invasion ; and it will be for England to find a man to set against me.”

“ England will have difficulty, sire, in doing that ; ” Carne answered with a grim smile, for he shared the contempt of English Generals then prevalent. “ If the Continent cannot do it, how can the poor England ? Once let your Majesty land, and all is over. But what are your Majesty’s orders for me ? And where do you propose to make the landing ? ”

“Never ask more than one question at a time,” Napoleon answered with his usual curt-ness; “my orders to you are to return at once. Prepare your supplies for a moment’s notice. Through private influence of some fair lady, you have command of the despatches of that officer at Spring-port, who has the control of the naval forces there. Ha! What was that? I heard a sound up yonder. Hasten up, and see if there is any listener. It seemed to be there, where the wood grows thick.”

Blyth Scudamore, forgetful of himself, had moved, and a dry stick cracked beneath his foot. Carne, at the Emperor’s glance and signal, sprang up the bank, with the help of some bushes, drew his sword and passed it between the wattles, then parted them, and rushed through, but saw no sign of any one. For Scuddy had slipped away, as lightly as a shadow, and keeping in a mossy trough had gained another shelter. Here he was obliged to slink in the smallest possible compass, kneeling upon both knees, and shrugging in both shoulders. Peering very sharply through an intertwist of suckers (for his shelter was a stool of hazel, thrown up to repair the loss of stem), he perceived that the Emperor had moved his horse a little when Carne rejoined and reassured him. And this prevented Scudamore from being half

so certain as he would have liked to be, about further particulars of this fine arrangement.

“No,” was the next thing he heard Napoleon say, whose power of saying ‘no’ had made his ‘yes’ invincible; “no, it is not to be done like that. You will await your instructions, and not move, until you receive them from my own hand. Make no attempt to surprise anybody, or anything, until I have ten thousand men ashore. Ten thousand will in six hours attain to fifty thousand, if the shore proves to be as you describe; so great is the merit of flat-bottomed boats. Your duty will be to leave the right surprise to us, and create a false one among the enemy. This you must do in the distance of the west, as if my Brest fleet were ravaging there, and perhaps destroying Plymouth. You are sure that you can command the signals for this?”

“Sire, I know everything as if I sat among it. I can do as I please with the fair secretary; and her father is an ancient fool.”

“Then success is more easy than I wish to have it; because it will not make good esteem. If Nelson comes at all, he will be too late, as he generally is too early. London will be in our hands, by the middle of July at the latest, probably much earlier; and then Captain Carne shall name his own reward. Meanwhile forget

not any word of what I said. Make the passage no more. You will not be wanted here. Your services are far more important where you are. You may risk the brave Charron, but not yourself. Send over by the 20th of May, a letter to me, under care of Decrès, to be opened by no hand but mine, upon my return from Italy, and let the messengers wait for my reply. Among them must be the young man who knows the coast, and we will detain him for pilot. My reply will fix the exact date of our landing, and then you will despatch, through the means at your command, any English force that might oppose our landing to the West, where we shall create a false alarm. Is all this clear to you? You are not stupid. The great point is to do all at the right time, having consideration of the weather."

"All is clear, and shall be carried out clearly, to the best of your Majesty's humble servant's power."

Napoleon offered his beautiful white hand, which Carne raised to his lips, and then the Emperor was gone. Carne returned slowly to the boat, with triumph written prematurely on his dark stern face; while Scudamore's brisk and ruddy features were drawn out to a wholly unwonted length, as he quietly made his way out of the covert.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN A SAD PLIGHT.

“How shall I get out of this parole? Or shall I break it, instead of getting out? Which shall I think of first, my honour, or my country? The safety of millions, or the pride of one? An old Roman would have settled it very simply. But a Christian cannot do things so. Thank God, there is no hurry, for a few days yet! But I must send a letter to Desportes this very night. Then I must consider about waiting for a week.”

Scudamore, unable to think out his case as yet,—especially after running as if his wind could turn a vane—was sitting on the bank, to let the river-bed get darker, before he put his legs into the mud to get across. For the tide was out, and the old boat high and dry, and a very weak water remained to be crossed (though, like nearly all things that are weak, it was muddy), but the channel had a moist gleam in the dry spring air, and anybody moving would

be magnified afar. He felt that it would never do for him (with such a secret) to be caught, and brought to book, or even to awake suspicion of his having it. The ancient Roman, of whom he had thought, would have broken parole for his country's sake, and then fallen on his sword for his own sake; but although such behaviour should be much admired, it is nicer to read of such things than to do them. Captain Scuddy was of large and steady nature, and nothing came to him with a jerk or jump—perhaps because he was such a jumper—and he wore his hat well on the back of his head, because he had no fear of losing it. But for all that, he found himself in a sad quandary now.

To begin with, his parole was not an ordinary leave, afforded by his captors to save themselves trouble; but a special grace, issuing from friendship, and therefore requiring to be treated in a friendly vein. The liberality of these terms had enabled him to dwell as a friend among friends, and to overhear all that he had heard. In the balance of perplexities, this weighed heavily against his first impulse to cast away all, except paramount duty to his Country. In the next place, he knew that private feeling urged him as hotly as public duty, to reject every scruple of honour, and make off. For what he had heard about the “fair secretary” was rankling bitterly

in his deep heart. He recalled at this moment the admirable precept of an ancient sage, that in such a conflict of duties, the doubter should incline to the course least agreeable to himself, inasmuch as the reasons against it are sure to be urged the most feebly in self-council. Upon the whole, the question was a nice one for a casuist; and if there had not been a day to spare, duty to his country must have over-ridden private faith.

However, as there was time to spare, he resolved to reconcile private honour with the sense of public duty; and returning to his room, wrote a careful letter (of which he kept a copy) to his friend Desportes, now on board, and commanding the flagship of one division of the Flotilla. He simply said, without giving his reason, that his parole must expire in eight days after date, allowing one day for delivery of his letter. Then he told M. Jalais what he had done; and much sorrow was felt in the household. When the time had expired without any answer from Captain Desportes (who meant to come and see him, but was unable to do so), Scudamore packed up a few things needful, expecting to be placed in custody, and resolved to escape from it, at any risk of life. Then he walked to Etaples, a few miles down the river, and surrendered himself to the Commandant there. This was a rough man—as Desportes had said—and with

more work to do than he could manage. With very little ceremony, he placed the English prisoner in charge of a veteran Corporal, with orders to take him to the lock-up in the barracks, and there await further instructions. And then the Commandant in the hurry of his duties forgot all about him.

Captain Scuddy now found himself in quarters, and under treatment, very trying to his philosophy. Not that the men who had him in charge were purposely unkind to him; only they were careless about his comfort, and having more important work to see to, fed him at their leisure, which did not always coincide with his appetite. Much of his meat was watery and dirty, and seemed to be growing its own vegetables, and sometimes to have over-ripened them. Therefore he began to lose substance, and his cheeks became strangers to the buxom gloss which had been the delight of Madame Fropot. But although they did not feed him well, they took good care of him in other ways, affording no chance of exit.

But sour fruit often contains good pips. Scudamore's food was not worth saying grace for, and yet a true blessing attended it. Forasmuch as the Frenchmen diminished the width of their prisoner, but not of the window. Falling away very rapidly, for his mind was faring as badly as

his body (having nothing but regrets to feed upon, which are no better diet than daisy-soup), the gentle Scuddy, who must have become a good wrangler if he had stopped at Cambridge, began to frame a table of cubic measure, and consider the *ratio* of his body to that window, or rather to the aperture thereof. One night, when his supper had been quite forgotten by everybody except himself, he lay awake thinking for hours and hours about his fair Dolly and the wicked Carne, and all the lies he must have told about her—for not a single syllable would Scudamore believe—and the next day he found himself become so soft and limp, as well as reduced to his lowest dimension, that he knew, by that just measure which a man takes of himself when he has but a shred of it left, that now he was small enough to go between the bars. And now it was high time to feel that assurance, for the morning brought news that the order for his removal to a great prison far inland was come, and would be carried out the next day. “Now or never,” was the only chance before him.

Having made up his mind he felt refreshed, and took his food with gratitude. Then as soon as the night was dark and quiet, and the mighty host for leagues and leagues launched into the realms of slumber,—springing with both feet well together, as he sprang from the tub at Stonning-

ton, Scuddy laid hold of the iron bars which spanned the window vertically, opened the lattice softly, and peeped out in quest of sentinels. There were none on duty very near him, though he heard one pacing in the distance. Then flinging himself on his side he managed, with some pain to his well-rounded chest, to squeeze it through the narrow slit, and hanging from the bar dropped gently. The drop was deep, and in spite of all precautions he rolled to the bottom of a grassy ditch. There he lay quiet to rest his bruises, and watch whether any alarm was raised. Luckily for him the moon was down, and no one had observed his venture. Crawling on all fours along a hollow place, he passed the outposts, and was free.

Free in mind as well as body, acquitted from all claims of honour, and able without a taint upon his name to bear most important news to England, if he could only get away from France. This would be difficult, as he was well aware; but his plan had been thoroughly considered in his prison, and he set forth to make the best of it. Before his escape had been discovered, he was under M. Jalais' roof once more, and found his good friends resolved never to betray him. "But I must not expose you to the risk," said he, "of heavy fine and imprisonment. I shall have to say good-bye to all your goodness in

an hour. And I shall not even allow you to know what road I take, lest you should be blamed for sending my pursuers on the wrong one. But search my room in three days' time, and you will find a packet to pay for something which I must steal for the present. I pray you, ask nothing, for your own sake."

They fed him well, and he took three loaves, and a little keg of cider, as well as the bag he had packed before he surrendered himself at Etaples. Madame Fropot wept, and kissed him, because he reminded her of her lost son; and M. Jalais embraced him, because he was not at all like any son of his. With hearty good wishes, and sweet regret, and promises never to forget them, the Englishman quitted this kind French house, and became at once a lawful and a likely mark for bullets.

The year was now filled with the flurry of Spring,—the quick nick of time when a man is astonished at the power of Nature's memory. A great many things had been left behind, mainly for their own good, no doubt; some of the animal, some of the vegetable, some of the mineral kingdom even; yet none of them started for anarchy. All were content to be picked up, and brought on according to the power of the world, making allowance for the pinches of hard times, and the blows of east winds that had blown

themselves out. Even the prime grumbler of the earth—a biped, who looks up to heaven for that purpose mainly—was as nearly content with the present state of things, as he can be with anything, until it is the past. Scudamore only met one man, but that one declared it was a lovely night; and perhaps he was easier to please, because he had only one eye left.

The stars had appeared, and the young leaves turned the freshness of their freedom towards them, whether from the crisp impulse of night, or the buoyant influence of kindness in the air. There was very little wind, and it was laden with no sound, except the distant voice of an indefatigable dog; but Scudamore perceived that when the tide set downwards, a gentle breeze would follow down the funnel of the river. Then he drew the ancient boat, which he had used before, to the mossy bank; and having placed his goods on board, fetched a pair of oars, and the short mast and brown sail, from the shed where they were kept, and at the top of a full tide launched forth alone upon his desperate enterprise.

There was faint light in the channel, but the banks looked very dark; and just as he cast loose, he heard the big clock at Montreuil, a great way up the valley, slowly striking midnight. And he took it for good omen, as he swiftly

passed the orchard, that his old friend the ox trotted down to the corner, and showed his white forehead under a sprawling apple-tree, and gave him a salute, though he scarcely could have known him. By this time the breeze was freshening nicely, and Scudamore ceasing to row stepped the mast, and hoisting the brown sail glided along, at a merry pace and with a hopeful heart. Passing the mouth of the creek he saw no sign of the traitorous pilot-boat, neither did he meet any other craft in channel, although he saw many moored at either bank. But nobody challenged him, as he kept in mid-stream, and braced up his courage for the two great perils still before him, ere he gained the open sea. The first of these would be the outposts on either side at Etaples, not far from the barracks where he had been jailed, and here no doubt the sentinels would call him to account. But a far greater danger would be near the river's mouth; where a bridge of boats, with a broad gangway for troops, spanned the tidal opening.

There was no bridge across the river yet, near the town itself; but upon challenge from a sentry, Scudamore stood up and waved his hat, and shouted in fine nasal and provincial French, "The fisherman, Auguste Baudry of Montreuil," and the man withdrew his musket, and wished

him good success. Then he passed a sandy island with some men asleep upon it, and began to fear the daybreak, as he neared the bridge of boats. This crossed the estuary at a narrow part, and having to bear much heavy traffic was as solid as a floating bridge can be. A double row of barges was lashed and chained together, between piles driven deep into the river's bed; along them a road of heavy planks was laid, rising and falling as they rose and fell with tide; and a drawbridge near the middle (of about eight yards' span) must suffice for the traffic of the little river. This fabric was protected from the heavy western surges by the shoals of the bar, and from any English dash by a strong shore-battery at either end. At first sight it looked like a black wall across the river.

The darkness of night is supposed to be deepest just before dawn—but that depends upon the weather—and the sleep of weary men is often in its prime at that time. Scudamore (although his life, and all that life hangs on from heaven, were quivering at the puff of every breeze) was enabled to derive some satisfaction from a yawn; such as goes the round of a good company sometimes, like the smell of the supper of sleep that is to come. Then he saw the dark line of the military bridge, and lowered his sail, and unstepped his little mast. The strength of

the tide was almost spent, so that he could deal with this barrier at his leisure, instead of being hurled against it.

Unshipping the rudder, and laying one oar astern, Scudamore fetched along the inner row of piles, for he durst not pass under the draw-bridge; steering his boat to an inch, while he sat with his face to the oar, working noiselessly. Then he spied a narrow opening between two barges, and drove his boat under the chain that joined them, and after some fending and groping with his hands in the darkness under the planks of the bridge, contrived to get out, when he almost despaired of it, through the lower tier of the supporters. He was quit of that formidable barrier now; but a faint flush of dawn and of reflection from the sea compelled him to be very crafty. Instead of pushing straightway for the bar and hoisting sail,—which might have brought a charge of grape-shot after him,—he kept in the gloom of the piles nearly into the left bank, and then hugged the shadow it afforded. Nothing but the desolate sands surveyed him, and the piles of wrack cast up by gales from the west. Then with a stout heart he stepped his little mast, and the breeze, which freshened towards the rising of the sun, carried him briskly through the tumble of the bar.

The young man knelt, and said his morning

prayer, with one hand still upon the tiller; for like most men who have fought well for England, he had staunch faith in the Power that has made and guides the nations, until they rebel against it. So far his success had been more than his own unaided hand might work, or his brain with the utmost of its labours second. Of himself he cast all thoughts away, for his love seemed lost, and his delight was gone; the shores of his country, if he ever reached them, would contain no pleasure for him; but the happiness of millions might depend upon his life, and first of all that of his mother.

All by himself in this frail old tub, he could scarcely hope to cross the Channel, even in the best of weather, and if he should escape the enemy, while his scanty supplies held out. He had nothing to subsist on but three small loaves, and a little keg of cider, and an old tar-tub which he had filled with brackish water, upon which the oily curdle of the tar was floating. But for all that, he trusted that he might hold out, and retain his wits long enough to do good service.

The French coast, trending here for leagues and leagues nearly due north and south, is exposed to the long accumulating power of a western gale, and the mountain roll of billows that have known no check. If even a smart breeze from the west sprang up, his rickety little craft, intended only

for inland navigation, would have small chance of living through the tumult. But his first care was to give a wide berth to the land, and the many French vessels that were moored or moving, whether belonging to the great flotilla, or hastening to supply its wants. Many a time he would have stood forth boldly, as fast as the breeze and tide permitted; but no sooner had he shaped a course for the open sea than some hostile sail appeared ahead, and forced him to bear away until she was far onward. Thus after a long day of vigilance and care, he was not more than five miles from land, when the sun set, and probably further from the English coast than when he set forth in the morning; because he had stood towards the south of west all day, to keep out of sight of the left wing of the enemy; and as the straight outline of the coast began to fade, he supposed himself to be about halfway between the mouth of the Canche and that of the little Authie.

Watching with the eyes of one accustomed to the air the last communication of the sun, and his postscript (which, like a lady's, contains the gist of the meaning), Scudamore perceived that a change of weather might come shortly, and must come ere long. There was nothing very angry in the sky, nor even threatening; only a general uncertainty and wavering; "I

wish you well all round ;” instead of “ Here’s a guinea apiece for you.” Scuddy understood it, and resolved to carry on.

Having no compass, and small knowledge of the coast—which lay out of range of the British investment—he had made up his mind to lie by for the night, or at any rate to move no more than he could help, for fear of going altogether in the wrong direction. He could steer by the stars—as great mariners did, when the world was all discovery—so long as the stars held their skirts up ; but on the other hand, those stars might lead him into the thick of the enemy. Of this, however, he must now take his chance, rather than wait and let the wind turn against him. For his main hope was to get into the track where British frigates, and ships of light draught, like his own dear *Blonde*, were upon patrol, inside of the course of the great war-chariots, the ships of the line, that drave heavily. Revolving much grist in the mill of his mind, as the sage Ulysses used to do, he found it essential to supply the motive power bodily. One of Madame Fropot’s loaves was very soon disposed of, and a good draught of sound cider helped to renew his flagging energy.

Throughout that night he kept wide awake, and managed to make fair progress, steering as well as he could judge a little to the west of

north. But before sunrise the arrears of sleep increased at compound interest, and he lowered his sail, and discharged a part of the heavy sum scored against him. But when he awoke, and glanced around him, with eyes that resented scanty measure, even a sleepy glance sufficed to show much more than he wished to see. Both sky and sea were overcast with doubt, and alarm, and evil foreboding. A dim streak lay where the land had been, and a white gleam quivered from the sunrise on the waves; as if he were spreading water-lilies, instead of scattering roses. As the earth has its dew that foretells a bright day—whenever the dew is of the proper sort, for three kinds are established now—so the sea has a flit of bloom in the early morning (neither a colour, nor a sparkle, nor a vapour) which indicates peace and content for the day. But now there was no such fair token upon it, but a heavy and surly and treacherous look, with lumps here and there; as a man who intends to abuse us thrusts his tongue to get sharp in his cheek.

Scudamore saw that his poor old boat, scarcely sound enough for the men of Gotham, was already complaining of the uncouth manners of the strange place to which she had been carried in the dark. That is to say, she was beginning to groan, at a very quiet slap in the

cheeks, or even a thoroughly well-meaning push in the rear.

“You are welcome to groan, if you don’t strain,” exclaimed the heartless Captain Scuddy.

Even as he spoke, he beheld a trickle of water glistening down the forward bends, and then a little rill, and then a spurt, as if a serious leak was sprung. He found the source of this, and contrived to caulk it with a strand of tarred rope for the present; but the sinking of his knife into the forward timber showed him that a great part of the bows was rotten. If a head-sea arose the crazy old frame would be prone to break in bodily; whereas if he attempted to run before the sea, already beginning to rise heavily from the west, there was nothing to save the frail craft from being pooped. On every side it was a bad look-out; there was every sign of a gale impending, which he could not even hope to weather, and the only chance of rescue lay in the prompt appearance of some British ship.

Even in this sad plight, his courage and love of native land prevailed against the acceptance of aid from Frenchmen, if any should approach to offer it. Rather would he lie at the bottom of the Channel, or drift about among contending fishes, than become again a prisoner with his secret in his mind, and no chance of sending it to save his country. As a forlorn hope, he pulled

out a stump of pencil, and wrote on the back of a letter from his mother a brief memorandum of what he had heard, and of the urgency of the matter. Then taking a last draught of his tarry water, he emptied the little tub, and fixed the head in, after he had enclosed his letter. Then he fastened the tub to an oar, to improve the chance of its being observed, and laid the oar so that it would float off, in case of the frail boat foundering. The other oar he kept at hand to steer with, as long as the boat should live; and to help him to float, when she should have disappeared.

This being done, he felt easier in his mind, as a man who has prepared for the worst should do. He renewed his vigour, which had begun to flag under constant labour and long solitude, by consuming another of his loaves, and taking almost the last draught of his cider; and after that he battled throughout the dreary day against the increase of bad weather. Towards the afternoon he saw several ships, one of which he took to be a British frigate; but none of them espied his poor labouring craft, or at any rate showed signs of doing so. Then a pilot-boat ran by him, standing probably for Boulogne, and at one time less than a league away. She appeared to be English, and he was just about to make signal for aid, when a patch in her foresail

almost convinced him that she was the traitor of the Canche returning. She was probably out of her proper course in order to avoid the investing fleet, and she would run inside it when the darkness fell. Better to go to the bottom than invoke such aid; and he dropped the oar with his neckerchief upon it, and faced the angry sea again, and the lonely despair of impending night.

What followed was wiped from his memory for years, and the loss was not much to be regretted. When he tried to think about it, he found nothing but a roaring of wind and of waves in his ears, a numbness of arms as he laboured with the oar tholed abaft to keep her heavy head up, a prickly chill in his legs as the brine in the wallowing boat ran up them, and then a great wallop and gollop of the element too abundant round him.

But at last, when long years should have brought more wisdom, he went poaching for supper upon Welsh rabbits. That night, all the ghastly time came back, and stood minute by minute before him. Every swing of his body, and sway of his head, and swell of his heart was repeated—the buffet of the billows when the planks were gone, the numb grasp of the slippery oar, the sucking down of legs which seemed

turning into seaweed, the dashing of dollops of surf into mouth and nose closed ever so carefully, and then the last sense of having fought a good fight, but fallen away from human arms, into "Oh Lord, receive my spirit!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN SAVAGE GUISE.

“A MAN came out of the sea to-day, and made me believe we were all found out,” said the gay Charron to the gloomy Carne, a day or two after poor Scudamore’s wreck. “I never beheld a more strange-looking creature, for possessor of the human face divine, as some of your poets have found to say. He has hair from his head all down to here”—the little captain pointed to a part of his system, which would have been larger in more tranquil times—“and his clothes were so thin, that one was able to see through them, and the tint of his face was of roasted sugar, such as it is not to obtain in England. A fine place for fat things, but not for thin ones.”

“My friend, you arouse my curiosity;” the master of the feast, which was not a very fat one, answered as he lazily crossed his long legs; “you are always apprehensive about detection, of which I have ceased to entertain all fear, during the short time that remains. This

stranger of yours must have been very wet, if he had just appeared out of the sea. Was it that which made his clothes transparent, like those of the higher class of ladies ? ”

“ You have not the right understanding of words. He was appeared out of the sea, but the wood of a boat was spread between them. He was as dry as I am ; and that is saying much, with nothing but this squeezing of bad apples for to drink.”

“ Ah, we shall have better soon. What an impatient throat it is ! Well, what became of this transparent man, made of burnt sugar, and with hair below his belt ? ”

“ I tell you that you take it in a very different way. But he was a long man, as long almost as you are, and with much less of indolence in the moving of his legs. It was not sincerely wise for me to exhibit myself, in the land. I was watching for a signal from the sea, and a large ship, not of the navy but of merchants, was hanging off about a league and delaying for her boat. For this reason I prevented him from seeing me, and that created difficulty of my beholding him. But he was going along the basin of the sea towards Springhaven—‘ Spring-port ’ it is designated by the Little Corporal ; ah ha, how the language of the English comes left to him ! ”

“And how right it comes to you, my friend, through your fine self-denial in speaking it with me! It is well for our cause that it is not sincerely wise for you to exhibit yourself in the land; or we should have you making sweet eyes at English young ladies, and settling down to roast beef and nut-brown ale. Fie then, my friend, where is your patriotism?”

“These English young ladies,” said the Frenchman unabashed, “are very fine in my opinion, very fine indeed; and they could be made to dress, which is sincerely an external thing. By occasion, I have seen the very most belle, and charming and adorable of all the creatures ever made by the good God. And if she was to say to me, ‘abandon France, my Captain, and become my good husband’—and she has the money also—the fair France would go to the bottom, and the good ship Charron hoist the Union-jack.”

“This becomes serious;” Carne had long learned to treat his French colleague with a large contempt; “I shall have to confine you in the Yellow Jar, my friend. But what young lady has bewitched you so, and led your most powerful mind astray?”

“I will tell you. I will make no secret of it. You have none of those lofty feelings, but you will be able in another to comprehend them.

It is the daughter of the Coast-Defender—Admiral Charles Sir Darling ! ”

“ Admiral Darling has two daughters. Which of them has the distinguished honour of winning the regard of Captain Charron ? ”

“ If there are two, it is so much more better. If I succeed not with one, I will try with the other. But the one who has made me captive for the present, is the lady with the dark hair done up like this.”

In a moment Charron had put up his hair, which was thick but short, into a double sheaf; and Carne knew at once that it was Faith whose charms had made havoc of the patriotism of his colleague. Then he smiled, and said, “ My friend, that is the elder daughter.”

“ I have some knowledge of the laws of England,” the Frenchman continued complacently; “ the elder will have the most money; and I am not rich, though I am courageous. In the confusion that ensues I shall have the very best chance of commending myself; and I confide in your honourable feeling to give me the push forward by occasion. Say it is well conceived, my friend? We never shall conquer these Englishmen; but we may be triumphant with their ladies.”

“ It is a most excellent scheme of invasion,” Carne answered with his slow sarcastic smile,

“and you may rely on me for what you call the push forward, if a Frenchman ever needs it with a lady. But I wish to hear more about that brown man.”

“I can tell you no more. But the matter is strange. Perhaps he was visiting the fat Captain Stooobar. I feel no solicitude concerning him with my angel. She would never look twice at such a savage.”

But the gallant French captain missed the mark this time. The strange-looking man with the long brown beard, quitted the shore before he reached the stepping-stones, and making a short cut across the rabbit-warren, entered the cottage of Zebedee Tugwell, without even stopping to knock at the door. The master was away, and so were all the children; but stout Mrs. Tugwell, with her back to the door, was tending the pot that hung over the fire. At the sound of a footstep she turned round, and her red face grew whiter than the ashes she was stirring.

“Oh, Mr. Erle, is it you, or your ghostie?” she cried, as she fell against the door of the brick oven. “Do ’ee speak, for God’s sake, if he have given the power to ’e.”

“He has almost taken it away again, so far as the English language goes,” Erle Twemlow answered, with a smile which was visible only in

his eyes, through long want of a razor ; “but I am picking up a little. Shake hands, Kezia, and then you will know me. Though I have not quite recovered that art as yet.”

“Oh, Mr. Erle !” exclaimed Zebedee’s wife, with tears ready to start for his sake and her own, “how many a time I’ve had you on my knees, afore I was blessed with any of my own, and a bad sort of blessing the best of ’em proves. Not that I would listen to a word again’ him. I suppose you never did happen to run again’ my Dan’el, in any of they furrin parts, from the way they makes the hair grow. I did hear tell of him over to Pebbleridge ; but not likely, so nigh to his own mother, and never come no nigher. And if they furrin parts puts on the hair so heavily, who could a’ knowed him to Pebbleridge ? They never was like we be. They’d as lief tell a lie as look at you, over there.”

In spite of his own long years of trouble, or perhaps by reason of them, Erle Twemlow, eager as he was to get on, listened to the sad tale that sought for his advice, and departed from wisdom—as good nature always does—by offering useless counsel. Counsel that could not be taken, and yet was far from being worthless, because it stirred anew the fount of hope, towards which the parched affections creep.

“But Lor bless me, sir, I never thought of

you!" Mrs. Tugwell exclaimed, having thought out her self. "What did Parson say, and your mother, and Miss Faith? It must a' been better than a play to see them."

"Not one of them knows a word about it yet; nor anybody in Springhaven, except you, Kezia. You were as good as my nurse, you know; I have never had a chance of writing to them, and I want you to help me to let them know it slowly."

"Oh, Mr. Erle, what a lovely young woman your Miss Faith is grown up by now! Some thinks more of Miss Dolly; but to my mind, you may as well put a mackerel before a salmon, for the sake of the stripes and the glittering. Now what can I do to make you decent, sir, for them duds and that hair is barbarious? My Tabby and Debby will be back in half an hour, and them growing up into young maidens now."

Twemlow explained that after living so long among savages in a burning clime, he had found it impossible to wear thick clothes, and had been rigged up in some Indian stuff, by the tailor of the ship which had rescued him. But now he supposed he must reconcile himself by degrees to the old imprisonment. But as for his hair, that should never be touched, unless he was restored to the British Army, and obliged to do as the others did. With many little jokes of a homely order,

Mrs. Tugwell, regarding him still as a child, supplied him with her husband's summer suit of thin duck, which was ample enough not to gall him; and then she sent her daughters with a note to the rector, begging him to come at seven o'clock, to meet a gentleman who wished to see him upon important business, near the plank bridge across the little river. Erle wrote that note, but did not sign it; and after many years of happy freedom from the pen, his handwriting was so changed, that his own father would not know it. What he feared was the sudden shock to his good mother; his father's nerves were strong, and must be used as buffers.

"Another trouble probably; there is nothing now but trouble," Mr. Twemlow was thinking, as he walked unwillingly towards the place appointed. "I wish I could only guess what I can have done, to deserve all these trials, as I become less fit to bear them. I would never have come to this lonely spot, except that it may be about Shargeloes. Everything now is turned upside down; but the Lord knows best, and I must bear it. Sir, who are you? And what do you want me for?"

At the corner where Miss Dolly had rushed into the rector's open arms so fast, a tall man, clad in white, was standing, with a staff about eight feet long in his hand. Having carried a

spear for four years now, Captain Twemlow found no comfort in his native land, until he had cut the tallest growth in Admiral Darling's osier-bed, and peeled it, and shaved it to a seven-sided taper. He rested this point in a socket of moss, that it might not be blunted, and then replied.

"Father, you ought to know me, although you have grown much stouter in my absence; and perhaps I am thinner than I used to be. But the climate disagreed with me, until I got to like it."

"Erle! Do you mean to say you are my boy Erle?" The rector was particular about his clothes. "Don't think of touching me. You are hair all over; and I dare say never had a comb. I won't believe a word of it, until you prove it."

"Well, mother will know me, if you don't." The young man answered calmly, having been tossed upon so many horns of adventure, that none could make a hole in him. "I thought that you would have been glad to see me; and I managed to bring a good many presents; only they are gone on to London. They could not be got at, to land them with me; but Captain Southcombe will be sure to send them. You must not suppose, because I am empty-handed now——"

“My dear son,” cried the father deeply hurt, “do you think that your welcome depends upon presents? You have indeed fallen into savage ways. Come, and let me examine you through your hair; though the light is scarcely strong enough now to go through it. To think that you should be my own Erle, alive after such a time, and with such a lot of hair! Only, if there is any palm-oil on it—this is my last new coat but one.”

“No, father, nothing that you ever can have dreamed of. Something that will make you a bishop, if you like, and me a member of the House of Lords. But I did not find it out myself—which makes success more certain.”

“They have taught you some great truths, my dear boy. The man who begins a thing never gets on. But I am so astonished that I know not what I say. I ought to have thanked the Lord long ago. Have you got a place without any hair upon it large enough for me to kiss you?”

Erle Twemlow, whose hand in spite of all adventures trembled a little upon his spear, lifted his hat and found a smooth spot sure to be all the smoother for a father's kiss.

“Let us go home,” said the old man, trying to exclude all excitement from his throat and heart; “but you must stay outside, until I

come to fetch you. I feel a little anxious, my dear boy, as to how your dear mother will get over it. She has never been strong, since the bad news came about you. And somebody else has to be considered. But that must stand over till to-morrow."

CHAPTER X.

THE SILVER VOICE.

MANY shrewd writers have observed that Britannia has a special luck—which the more devout call Providence—in holding her own, against not only her true and lawful enemies, but even those of her own bosom who labour most to ruin her. And truly she had need of all her fortune now, to save her from the skulking traitor, as well as the raging adversary.

“Now I will have my revenge,” said Carne, “on all who have outraged and plundered me. Crows—carrion-crows, I will turn them into owls without a nest. Prowling owls—to come blinking even now at the last of my poor relics Charron, what did that fellow say to old Jerry, the day I tied the dogs up?”

“He said, my dear friend, that he missed from the paintings which he had taken to his house the most precious of them all—the picture of your dear grandmother, by a man whose name it is hard to pronounce, but a Captain in the

British Army, very much fond of believing and painting all the most beautiful ladies; and since he had painted the mother of Vash—Vash—the man that conquered England in America—all his work was gone up to a wonderful price, and old Sheray should have one guinea, if he would exhibit to him where to find it. Meedle or Beedle—he had set his heart on getting it. He declared by the good God that he would have it, and that you had got it under a tombstone.”

“A sample of their persecutions! You know that I have never seen it, nor even heard of the Captain Middleton, who went on his roving from Springhaven. And, again, about my own front-door, or rather the door of my family for some four centuries, because it was carved as they cannot carve now, it was put into that vile Indenture. I care very little for my ancestors—benighted Britons of the county type—but these things are personal insults to me. I seldom talk about them, and I will not do so now.”

“My captain, you should talk much about it. That would be the good relief to your extensive mind. Revenge is not of the bright French nature; but the sky of this island procreates it. My faith, how I would rage at England, if it were not for the people, and their daughters! We shall see; in a few days

more, we shall astonish the fat John Bull; and then his little kittens—what do you call them?—calves of an ox, will come running to us.”

“Enough of your foolish talk;” said Carne. “The women are as resolute as the men. Even when we have taken London, not an English-woman will come near us, until all the men have yielded. Go down to your station, and watch for the boat. I expect an important despatch to-night. But I cannot stay here for the chance of it. I have business in Springhaven.”

His business in Springhaven was to turn young love to the basest use, to make a maiden (rash and flighty, but not as yet dishonourable) a traitor to her friends, and fatherland, and most of all to her own father. He had tried to poison Dolly’s mind with doses of social nonsense—in which he believed about as much as a Quack believes in his own pills—but his main reliance now was placed in his hold upon her romantic heart, and in her vague ambitions. Pure and faithful love was not to be expected from his nature; but he had invested in Dolly all the affection he could spare from self. He had laboured long, and suffered much, and the red crown of his work was nigh.

Riding slowly down the hill, about half a mile from the village, Carne saw a tall man

coming towards him with a firm deliberate walk. The stranger was dressed very lightly, and wore a hat like a tobacco-leaf, and carried a long wand in his hand, as if he were going to keep order in church. These things took the eye afar, but at shorter range became as nothing, compared with the aspect of the man himself. This was grand, with its steadfast gaze—no stare, but a calm and kind regard—its large tranquillity, and power of receiving without believing the words of men; and most of all in the depth of expression reserved by experience in the forest of its hair.

Carne was about to pass in silent wonder and uneasiness; but the other gently laid the rod across his breast and stopped him, and then waited for him to ask the reason why.

“Have you any business with me, good sir?” Carne would have spoken rudely, but saw that rudeness would leave no mark upon a man like this. “If so, I must ask you to be quick. And perhaps you will tell me, who you are.”

“I think that you are Caryl Carne,” said the stranger, not unpleasantly, but as if it mattered very little who was Caryl Carne, or whether there was any such existence. Carne stared fiercely, for he was of touchy temper; but he might as well have stared at a bucket of water, in the hope of deranging its tranquillity. “You

know me. But I don't know you;" he answered at last, with a jerk of his reins.

"Be in no hurry," said the other mildly; "the weather is fine, and time plentiful. I hope to have much pleasant knowledge of you. I have the honour to be your first cousin, Erle Twemlow. Shake hands with your kinsman."

Carne offered his hand, but without his usual grace and self-possession. Twemlow took it in his broad brown palm, in which it seemed to melt away, firm though it was and muscular.

"I was going up to call on you," said Twemlow, who had acquired a habit of speaking as if he meant all the world to hear. "I feel a deep interest in your fortunes, and hope to improve them enormously. You shall hear all about it, when I come up. I have passed four years in the wilds of Africa, where no white man ever trod before, and I have found out things no white man knows. We call those people savages; but they know a great deal more than we do. Shall I call to-morrow, and have a long talk?"

"I fear," replied Carne, who was cursing his luck for bringing this fellow home just now, "that I shall have no time for a week or two. I am engaged upon important business now, which will occupy my whole attention. Let me see! You are staying at the rectory, I suppose. The best plan will be for me to let you know,

when I can afford the pleasure of receiving you. In a fortnight, or three weeks at the latest——”

“Very well. I am never in a hurry. And I want to go to London to see about my things. But I dare say you will not object to my roving about the old castle now and then. I loved the old place as a boy; and I know every crick and cranny, and snakehole in it.”

“How glad they must have been to see you——restored from the dead, and with such rich discoveries! But you must be more careful, my good cousin, and create no more anxiety. Glad as I shall be to see you, I must not encourage you to further roving, which might end in your final disappearance. Two boar-hounds, exceedingly fierce and strong, and compelled by my straitened circumstances to pick up their own living, are at large on my premises night and day, to remonstrate with my creditors. We fear that they ate a man last night, who had stolen a valuable picture, and was eager for another by the same distinguished artist. His boots and hat were found unhurt; but of his clothes not a shred remained, to afford any pattern for enquiry. What would my feelings be if Aunt Maria arrived hysterically in the pony-carriage, and at great personal risk enquired——”

“I fear no dogs,” said Erle Twemlow, without any flash of anger in his steadfast eyes;

"I can bring any dog to lick my feet. But I fear any man who sinks lower than a dog, by obtaining a voice, and speaking lies with it. If you wish, for some reason of your own, to have nought to do with me, you should have said so ; and I might have respected you afterwards. But flimsy excuses, and trumpery lies, belong to the lowest race of savages, who live near the coast, and have been taught by Frenchmen."

Erle Twemlow stood, as he left off speaking, just before the shoulder of Carne's horse, ready to receive a blow, if offered, but without preparation for returning it. But Carne, for many good reasons—which occurred to his mind long afterwards—controlled his fury, and consoled his self-respect, by repaying in kind the contempt he received.

"Well done, Mr. Savage!" he said, with a violent effort to look amiable. "You and I are accustomed to the opposite extremes of society ; and the less we meet, the better. When a barbarian insults me, I take it as a foul word from a clodhopper, which does not hurt me, but may damage his own self-respect, if he cherishes such an illusion. Perhaps you will allow me to ride on, while you curb your very natural curiosity about a civilized gentleman."

Twemlow made no answer, but looked at him with a gentle pity, which infuriated Carne more

than the keenest insult. He lashed his horse, and galloped down the hill; while his cousin stroked his beard, and looked after him with sorrow.

“Everything goes against me now,” thought Caryl Carne, while he put up his horse, and set off for the Admiral’s Round-house; “I want to be cool as a cucumber; and that insolent villain has made pepper of me. What devil sent him here at such a time?”

For the moment it did not cross his mind that this man of lofty rudeness was the long-expected lover of Faith Darling, and therefore in some sort entitled to a voice about the doings of the younger sister. By many quiet sneers, and much expressive silence, he had set the brisk Dolly up against the quiet Faith; as a man who understands fowl nature can set even two young pullets pulling each other’s hackles out.

“So you are come at last!” said Dolly. “No one who knows me keeps me waiting; because I am not accustomed to it. I expect to be called for at any moment, by matters of real importance—not like this.”

“Your mind is a little disturbed,” replied Carne, as he took her hand and kissed it, with less than the proper rapture; “is it because of the brown and hairy man, just returned from Africa?”

“Not altogether. But that may be something. He is not a man to be laughed at. I wish you could have seen my sister.”

“I would rather see you; and I have no love of savages. He is my first cousin, and that affords me a domestic right to object to him. As a brother-in-law I will have none of him.”

“You forget,” answered Dolly, with a flash of her old spirit, which he was subduing too heavily, “that a matter of that sort depends upon us, and our father; and not upon the gentlemen. If the gentlemen don’t like it, they can always go away.”

“How can they go, when they are chained up like a dog? Women may wander from this one to that, because they have nothing to bind them; but a man is of steadfast material.”

“Erle Twenlow is, at any rate—though it is hard to see his material, through his hair—but that must come off; and I mean to do it. He is the best-natured man I have ever yet known, except one; and that one had got nothing to shave. Men never seem to understand about their hair, and the interest we feel concerning it. But it does not matter very much, compared to their higher principles.”

“That is where I carry every vote, of whatever sex you please”—Carne saw that this girl must be humoured for the moment—“anybody

can see what I am. Straightforward, and ready to show my teeth. Why should an honest man live in a bush ? ”

“ Faith likes it very much ; though she always used to say that it did seem so unchristian. Could you manage to come and meet him, Caryl ? We shall have a little dinner on Saturday, I believe, that every one may see Erle Twemlow. His beloved parents will be there, who are gone quite wild about him. Father will be at home for once ; and the Marquis of Southdown, and some officers, and Captain Stubbard and his wife will come, and perhaps my brother Frank, who admires you so much. You shall have an invitation in the morning.”

“ Such delights are not for me ; ” Carne answered with a superior smile ; “ unhappily my time is too important. But perhaps these festivities will favour me with the chance of a few words with my darling. How I long to see her, and how little chance I get ! ”

“ Because when you get it, you spend three quarters of the time in arguing, and the rest in finding fault. I am sure I go as far as anybody can ; and I won’t take you into my father’s Roundhouse, because I don’t think it would be proper.”

“ Ladies alone understand such subjects ; and a gentleman is thankful that they do. I am

quite content to be outside the Roundhouse—so called because it is square, perhaps—though the wind is gone back to the east again, as it always does now in an English summer, according to a man who has studied the subject—Zebedee Tugwell, the captain of the fleet. Dolly, beloved, and most worthy to be more so, clear your bright mind from all false impressions, whose only merit is that they are yours; and allow it to look clearly at a matter of plain sense.”

She was pleased to have compliments paid to her mind, even more than to her body—because there was no doubt about the merits of the latter—and she said, “that is very nice. Go on.”

“Well, beauty, you know that I trust you in everything, because of your very keen discretion, and freedom from stupid little prejudice. I have been surprised at times, when I thought of it in your absence, that any one so young who has never been through any course of political economy, should be able to take such a clear view of subjects which are far beyond the intellect of even the oldest ladies. But it must be your brother; no doubt he has helped you——”

“Not he!” cried the innocent Dolly, with fine pride; “I rather look down upon his reasoning powers; though I never could make such a pretty tink of rhymes—like the bells of the sheep, when the ground is full of turnips.”

“He approves of your elevated views,” said Carne, looking as grave as a crow at a church-clock; “they may not have come from him, because they are your own, quite as much as his poetry is his. But he perceives their truth, and he knows that they must prevail. In a year or two, we shall be wondering, sweet Dolly, when you and I sit side by side, as the stupid old King and Queen do now, that it ever has been possible for narrow-minded nonsense to prevail, as it did until we rose above it. We shall be admired as the benefactors, not of this country only, but of the whole world.”

Miss Dolly was fairly endowed with common-sense, but often failed to use it. She would fain have said now—“That sounds wonderfully fine; but what does it mean, and how are we to work it?” But unluckily she could not bring herself to say it. And when millions are fooled by the glibness of one man—even in these days of wisdom—who can be surprised at a young maid’s weakness?

“You wish me to help you in some way,” she said; “your object is sure to be good, and you trust me in everything, because of my discretion. Then why not tell me everything?”

“You know everything,” Carne replied, with a smile of affection and sweet reproach. “My object is the largest that a man can have; and

until I saw you, there was not the least taint of self-interest in my proceedings. But now it is not for the universe alone, for the grandeur of humanity, and the triumph of peace, that I have to strive ; but also for another little somebody, who has come—I am ashamed to say—to outweigh all the rest, in the balance of my too tender heart.”

This was so good, and so well delivered, that the lady of such love could do no less than vouchsafe a soft hand, and a softer glance, instead of pursuing hard reason.

“Beauty, it is plain enough to you, though it might not be so to stupid people,” Carne continued, as he pressed her hand, and vanquished the doubt of her enquiring eyes with the strength of his resolute gaze, “that bold measures are sometimes the only wise ones. Many English girls would stand aghast, to hear that it was needful for the good of England, that a certain number—a strictly limited number of Frenchmen—should land upon this coast.”

“I should rather think they would !” cried Dolly ; “and I would be one of them—you may be quite sure of that.”

“For a moment you might, until you came to understand.” Carne’s voice always took a silver tone, when his words were big with roguery ; as the man who is touting for his

neighbour's bees strikes the frying-pan softly at first, to tone the pulsations of the murmuring mob. "But every safeguard, and every guarantee, that can be demanded by the wildest prudence, will be afforded, before a step is taken. In plain truth, a large mind is almost shocked at such deference to antique prejudice. But the feelings of old women must be considered; and our measures are fenced with such securities, that even the most timid must be satisfied. There must be a nominal landing, of course, of a strictly limited number, and they must be secured for a measurable period from any ill-judged interruption. But the great point of all is to have no blood-guiltiness, no outbreak of fanatic natives, against benefactors coming in the garb of peace. A truly noble offer of the olive-branch must not be misinterpreted. It is the finest idea that has ever been conceived; and no one possessing a liberal mind can help admiring the perfection of this plan. For the sake of this country, and the world, and ourselves, we must contribute our little share, darling."

Carne, with the grace of a lofty protector as well as the face of an ardent lover, drew the bewildered maiden towards him, and tenderly kissed her pretty forehead, holding up his hand against all protest.

"It is useless to dream of drawing back," he

continued; "my beauty, and my poor outcast self, are in the same boat, and must sail on to success—such success as there never has been before, because it will bless the whole world, as well as secure our own perfect happiness. You will be more than the Queen of England. Statues of you will be set up everywhere; and where could the sculptors find such another model? I may count upon your steadfast heart, I know, and your wonderful quickness of perception."

"Yes; if I could only see that everything was right. But I feel that I ought to consult somebody of more experience in such things. My father, for instance, or my brother Frank, or even Mr. Twemlow, or perhaps Captain Stubbard."

"If you had thought of it a little sooner, and allowed me time to reason with them," Carne replied with a candid smile; "that would have been the very thing I should have wished, as taking a great responsibility from me. But alas, it would be fatal now. The main object now is to remove all chance of an ill-judged conflict, which would ruin all good feeling, and cost many valuable lives, perhaps even that of your truly gallant father. No, my Dolly, you must not open your beautiful lips to any one. The peace and happiness of the world depend entirely

upon your discretion. All will be arranged to a nicety, and a happy result is certain. Only I must see you, about some small points, as well as to satisfy my own craving. On Saturday you have that dinner-party, when somebody will sit by your side, instead of me. How miserably jealous I shall be! When the gentlemen are at their wine, you must console me, by slipping away from the ladies, and coming to the window of the little room, where your father keeps his papers. I shall quit everything, and watch there for you among the shrubs, when it grows dark enough."

CHAPTER XI.

BELOW THE LINE.

OF the British Admirals then on duty, Collingwood alone, so far as now appears, had any suspicion of Napoleon's real plan.

"I have always had an idea that Ireland alone was the object they have in view," he wrote in July, 1805, "and still believe that to be their ultimate destination—that they [*i.e.*, the Toulon fleet] will now liberate the Ferrol squadron from Calder, make the round of the bay, and taking the Rochefort people with them appear off Ushant, perhaps with 34 sail, there to be joined by 20 more. Cornwallis, collecting his out-squadrons, may have 30 and upwards. This appears to be a probable plan; for unless it is to bring their great fleets and armies to some point of service—some rash attempt at conquest—they have been only subjecting them to chance of loss; which I do not believe the Corsican would do, without the hope of an adequate reward. This summer is big with events."

This was written to Lord Nelson, upon his return to Europe, after chasing that Toulon fleet to the West Indies, and back again. And a day or two later, the same Vice-Admiral wrote to his friend very clearly, as before—

“Truly glad will I be to see you, and to give you my best opinion on the present state of affairs, which are in the highest degree intricate. But reasoning on the policy of the present French Government, who never aim at little things while great objects are in view, I have considered the invasion of Ireland as the real mark and butt of all their operations. The flight to the West Indies was to take off the naval force, which is the great impediment to their undertaking. The Rochefort squadron’s return confirmed me. I think they will now collect their force at Ferrol—which Calder tells me are in motion—pick up those at Rochefort, who, I am told, are equally ready, and will make them above thirty sail ; and then, without going near Ushant or the Channel fleet, proceed to Ireland. Detachments must go from the Channel fleet to succour Ireland, when the Brest fleet—21 I believe of them—will sail, either to another part of Ireland, or up the Channel—a sort of force that has not been seen in those seas, perhaps ever.”

Lord Nelson just lately had suffered so much

from the disadvantage of not "following his own head, and so being much more correct in judgment, than following the opinion of others," that his head was not at all in a receptive state; and like all who have doubted about being right, and found the doubt wrong, he was hardened into the merits of his own conclusion. "Why have I gone on a goose-chase?" he asked; "because I have twice as many ears as eyes."

This being so, he stuck fast to the conviction which he had nourished all along, that the scheme of invasion was a sham, intended to keep the British fleet at home, while the enemy ravaged our commerce and colonies afar. And by this time the Country, grown heartily tired of groundless alarms and suspended menace, was beginning to view with contempt a camp that was wearing out its own encampment. Little was it dreamed in the sweet rose-gardens of England, or the fragrant hay-fields, that the curl of blue smoke while the dinner was cooking, the call of milkmaids, the haymaker's laugh, or the whinny of Dobbin between his mouthfuls, might be turned (ere a man of good appetite was full) into foreign shouts, and shriek of English maiden, crackling homestead, and blazing stackyard, blare of trumpets, and roar of artillery, cold flash of steel, and the soft warm trickle of a father's or a husband's blood.

But the chance of this hung upon a hair just now. One hundred and sixty thousand soldiers—the finest sons of Mars that demon has ever yet begotten—fifteen thousand warlike horses, ready to devour all the oats of England, cannons that never could be counted (because it was not always safe to go near them), and ships that no reckoner could get to the end of, because he was always beginning again.

Who was there now to meet all these? Admiral Darling, and Captain Stubbard, and Zebedee Tugwell (if he found them intrusive), and Erle Twemlow, as soon as he got his things from London. There might be a few more to come forward, as soon as they saw the necessity; but Mr. John Prater could not be relied on—because of the trade he might expect to drive—Mr. Shargeloes had never turned up again; and as for poor Cheeseman, he had lost himself so entirely now, that he made up the weight of a pound of sausages, in the broad summer light, with a tallow candle. Like others concerned in this history, he had jumped at the stars, and cracked his head against a beam, in manner to be recorded.

The Country being destitute thus of defenders—for even Stubbard's battery was not half-manned, because it had never been wanted,—the plan of invasion was thriving well, in all but one

particular. The fleet under Villeneuve was at large, so was that under Lallemand, who had superseded Missiessy, so was the force of Gravina, and another Spanish admiral; but Ganteaume had failed to elude the vigilance of that hero of storms, Cornwallis. Napoleon arrived at Boulogne on the 3rd of August, and reviewed his troops, in a line on the beach some eight miles long. A finer sight he had never seen, and he wrote in his pride—"The English know not what is hanging over their ears. If we are masters of the passage for twelve hours, England is conquered." But all depended on Villeneuve; and happily he could not depend upon his nerves.

Meanwhile the young man, who was charged with a message which he would gladly have died to discharge, was far away, eating out his heart in silence, or vainly relieving it with unknown words. At the last gasp, or after he ceased to gasp for the time, and was drifting insensible, but happily with his honest face still upward, a Dutchman keeping a sharp look-out for English cruisers, espied him. He was taken on board of a fine bark bound from Rotterdam for Java, with orders to choose the track least infested by that ravenous shark, Britannia. Scudamore was treated with the warmest kindness and the most gentle attention; for the captain's wife was on

board, and her tender heart was moved with compassion. Yet even so, three days passed by, with no more knowledge of time on his part, than the face of a clock has of its hands; and more than a week was gone, before both body and mind were in tone and tune again. By that time the stout Dutch bark, having given a wide berth to the wakes of war, was forty leagues west of Cape Finisterre, under orders to touch no land short of the Cape, except for fresh water at St. Jago.

Blyth Scudamore was blest with that natural feeling of preference for one's own kin and country, which the much larger minds of the present period flout, and scout as barbarous. Happily our periodical blight is expiring, like cuckoo-spit, in its own bubbles; and the time is returning, when the bottle-blister will not be accepted as the good ripe peach. Scudamore was of the times that have been (and perhaps may be coming again, in the teeth and the jaw of universal suffrage), of resolute, vigorous, loyal people, holding fast all that God gives them, and declining to be led by the tail, by a gentleman who tacked their tail on, as his handle.

This certainty of belonging still to a firm and substantial race of men (whose extinction would leave the world nothing to breed from) made the gallant Scudamore so anxious to do his duty, that he could not do it. Why do we whistle to

a horse over-burdened with a heavy load up-hill? That his mind may grow tranquil, and his ears train forward, his eyes lose their nervous contraction, and a fine sense of relief pervade him. But if he has a long hill to surmount, with none to restrain his ardour, the sense of duty grows stronger than any consideration of his own good, and the best man has not the conscience needful to understand half his emotions.

Thus the sense of duty kept Blyth Scudamore full of misery. Every day carried him further from the all-important issues; and the chance of returning in time grew faint, and fainter at every sunset. The kindly Dutchman, and his wife, were aware of some burden on his mind, because of its many groaning sallies, while astray from judgment. But as soon as his wits were clear again, and his body fit to second them, Blyth saw that he could not crave their help, against the present interests of their own land. Holland was at enmity with England, not of its own accord, but under the pressure of the man who worked so hard the great European mangle. Captain Van Oort had picked up some English, and his wife could use tongue and ears in French; while Scudamore afforded himself, and them, some little diversion by attempts in Dutch. Being of a wonderfully happy nature—for happiness is the greatest wonder in the world—he

could not help many a wholesome laugh, in spite of all the projects of Napoleon.

Little things seldom jump into bigness, till a man sets his microscope at them. According to the everlasting harmonies, Blyth had not got a penny, because he had not got a pocket to put it in. A pocketful of money would have sent him to the bottom of the sea, that breezy April night when he drifted for hours, with eyes full of salt, twinkling feeble answer to the twinkle of the stars. But he had made himself light of his little cash left, in his preparation for a slow decease, and perhaps the fish had paid tribute with it to the Cæsar of this Millennium. Captain Van Oort was a man of his inches in length, but in breadth about one third more, being thickened and spread, by the years that do this to a body containing a Christian mind. "You will never get out of them," said Mrs. Van Oort, when he got into her husband's large small-clothes; but he who had often jumped out of a tub felt no despair about jumping out of two. In every way Scudamore hoped for the best—which is the only right course for a man who has done his own best, and is helpless.

Keeping out of the usual track of commerce, because of the privateers, and other pests of war waylaying it, they met no sail of either friend or foe, until they cast anchor at St. Jago. Here

there was no ship bound for England, and little chance of finding one, for weeks or perhaps for months to come. The best chance of getting home lay clearly in going yet further away from home, and so he stuck to the good ship still; and they weighed for the Cape on the 12th of May. Everything set against poor Scuddy—wind, and wave, and the power of man. It had been the 16th of April, when he was rescued from the devouring sea; some days had been spent by the leisurely Dutchman in providing fresh supplies, and the stout bark's favourite maxim seemed to be—"the more haste the less speed." Baffling winds, and a dead calm, helped to second this philosophy; and the first week of June was past before they swung to their moorings in Table Bay.

"What chance is there now of my doing any good?" the young Englishman asked himself bitterly. "This place is again in the hands of the Dutch, and the English ships stand clear of it, or only receive supplies by stealth. I am friendless here, I am penniless; and worst of all, if I even get a passage home, there will be no home left. Too late, too late! What use is there in striving?"

Tears stood in his blue eyes, which were gentle as a lady's; and his forehead (usually calm, and smooth, and ready for the flicker of a very

pleasant smile) was as grave and determined as the brow of Caryl Carne. Captain Van Oort would have lent him 500 guilders, with the greatest pleasure, but Scudamore would not take more than fifty, to support him until he could obtain a ship. Then with hearty good-will, and lifelong faith in each other, the two men parted, and Scudamore's heart was uncommonly low—for a substance that was not a "Jack-in-the-box"—as he watched from the shore the slow fading into dreamland of the *Katterina*.

Nothing except patriotic feeling may justify a man, who has done no harm, in long-continued misery. The sense of violent bodily pain, or of perpetual misfortune, or of the baseness of all in whom he trusted, and other steady influx of many-fountained sorrow, may wear him for a time, and even fetch his spirit lower than the more vicarious woe can do. But the firm conviction that the family of man to which one belongs, and is proud of belonging, has fallen into the hands of traitors, eloquent liars, and vile hypocrites, and cannot escape without crawling in the dust—this produces a large deep gloom, and a crushing sense of doom, beyond philosophy. Scudamore could have endured the loss and the disillusion of his love—pure and strong as that power had been—but the ruin of his native land would turn his lively heart into a lump of stone.

For two or three days he roved about, among the people of the waterside—boatmen, pilots, shipping-agents, storekeepers, stevedores, crimps, or any others likely to know anything to help him. Some of these could speak a little English, and many had some knowledge of French; but all shook their heads at his eagerness to get to England. “You may wait weeks, or you may wait months,” said the one who knew most of the subject; “we are very jealous of the English ships. That country swallows up the sea so. It has been forbidden to supply the English ships; but for plenty money it is done sometimes; but the finger must be placed upon the nose, and upon the two eyes what you call the guinea; and in six hours, where are they? Swallowed up by the mist from the mountain. No, sir! If you have the great money, it is very difficult. But if you have not that, it is impossible.”

“I have not the great money; and the little money also has escaped from a quicksand in the bottom of my pocket.”

“Then you will never get to England, sir,” this gentleman answered pleasantly; “and unless I have been told things too severely, the best man that lives had better not go there, without a rock of gold in his pocket, grand enough to fill a thousand quicksands.”

Scudamore lifted the relics of his hat, and went in search of some other Job's comforter. Instead of a passage to England, he saw in a straight line before him the only journey, which a mortal may take without paying his fare.

To save himself from this gratuitous tour, he earned a little money in a porter's gang, till his quick step roused the indignation of the rest. With the loftiest perception of the rights of man, they turned him out of that employment (for the one "sacred principle of labour" is to play), and he, understanding now the nature of democracy, perceived that of all its many short cuts to starvation, the one with the fewest elbows to it is—to work.

While he was meditating upon these points—which persons of big words love to call "questions of political economy"—his hat, now become a patent ventilator, sat according to custom on the back of his head, exposing his large calm forehead, and the kind honesty of his countenance. Then he started a little (for his nerves were not quite as strong as when they had good feeding) at the sudden sense of being scrutinized by the most piercing gaze he had ever encountered.

The stranger was an old man of tall spare frame, wearing a shovel hat and long black gown drawn in with a belt, and around his bare

neck was a steel chain, supporting an ebony cross. With a smile, which displayed the firm angles of his face, he addressed the young man, in a language which Scudamore could not understand, but believed to be Portuguese.

“Thy words I am not able to understand. But the Latin tongue, as it is pronounced in England, I am able to interpret, and to speak, not too abundantly.” Scudamore spoke the best Latin he could muster at a moment’s notice; for he saw that this gentleman was a Catholic priest, and probably therefore of good education.

“Art thou then an Englishman, my son?” the stranger replied in the same good tongue. “From thy countenance and walk that opinion stood fast in my mind, at first sight of thee. Every Englishman is to me beloved; and every Frenchman unfriendly—as many, at least, as now govern the State. Father Bartholomew is my name; and though most men here are heretical, among the faithful I avail sufficiently. What saith the great Venusian? ‘In straitened fortunes, quit thyself as a man of spirit, and of mettle.’ I find thee in straitened fortunes, and would gladly enlarge thee; if that which thou art doing is pleasing to the God omnipotent.”

After a few more words, he led the hapless and hungry Englishman, to a quiet little cot

which overlooked the noble bay, and itself was overlooked by a tall flag-staff bearing the colours of Portugal. Here in the first place he regaled his guest, with the flank of a kid served with cucumber, and fruit gathered early, and some native wine, scarcely good enough for the Venusian bard, but as rich as ambrosia to Scudamore. Then he supplied him with the finest tobacco, that ever ascended in spiral incense to the cloud-compelling Jove. At every soft puff, away flew the blue devils, pagan, or Christian, or even Scientific ; and the brightness of the sleep-forbidden eyes returned, and the sweetness of the smile, so long gone hence in dread of being a trespasser. Father Bartholomew, neither eating, drinking, nor smoking, till the sun should set—for this was one of his fast-days—was heartily pleased with his guest's good cheer, and smiled with the large benevolence, which a lean face expresses with more decision than a plump and jolly one. “And now, my son,” he began again, in Latin more fluent and classical than the sailor could compass, after Cicero thrown by, “thou hast returned thanks to Almighty God ; for which I the more esteem thee. Oblige me, therefore, if it irk thee not, among smoke of the genial Nicotium, by telling thy tale, and explaining what hard necessity hath driven thee to these distant shores. Fear not, for thou seest

a lover of England, and hater of France, the infidel.”

Then Scudamore, sometimes hesitating, and laughing at his own bad Latin, told as much of his story as was needful; striving especially to make clear the importance of his swift return, and his fear that, even so, it would be too late.

“Man may believe himself too late; but the Lord ariseth early;” the good priest answered, with a smile of courage refreshing the heart of the Englishman; “behold how the hand of the Lord is steadfast, over those who serve him! To-morrow I might have been far away; to-day I am in time to help thee. While thou wast feeding, I received the signal of a swift ship for Lisbon, whose captain is my friend, and would neglect nothing to serve me. This night he will arrive, and with favourable breezes (which have set in this morning), he shall spread his sails again to-morrow, though he meant to linger perhaps for three days. Be of good cheer, my son; thou shalt sail to-morrow. I will supply thee with all that is needful, and thank God for a privilege so great. Thou shalt have money as well, for the passage from Lisbon to England, which is not long. Remember in thy prayers—for thou art devout—that old man, Father Bartholomew.”

CHAPTER XII.

IN EARLY MORN.

ONE Saturday morning in the month of August, an hour and a half before sunrise, Carne walked down to the big yew-tree, which stood far enough from the brink of the cliff to escape the salt, and yet near enough to command an extensive sea-view. This was the place where the young shoemaker, belonging to the race of Shanks, had been scared so sadly, that he lost his sweetheart, some two years and a half ago ; and this was the tree that had been loved by painters ; especially the conscientious Sharples, a pupil of Romney, who studied the nicks and the tricks of the bole, and the many fantastic frets of time, with all the loving care which ensured the truth of his simple and powerful portraits. But Sharples had long been away in the West ; and Carne, having taste for no art except his own, had despatched his dog Orso, the fiercer of the pair, at the only son of a brush, who had lately made ready to encamp against that tree. Upon which he decamped,

and went over the cliff, with a loss of much personal property.

The tree looked ghostly in the shady light, and gaunt arm-stretch of departing darkness, going as if it had not slept its sleep out. Now was the time when the day is afraid of coming, and the night unsure of going; and a large reluctance to acknowledge any change keeps everything waiting for another thing to move. What is the use of light, and shadow, the fuss of the morning, and struggle for the sun? Fair darkness has filled all the gaps between them, and why should they be sever'd into single life again? For the gladness of daybreak is not come yet, nor the pleasure of seeing the way again; the lifting of the darkness leaves heaviness beneath it; and if a rashly early bird flops down upon the grass, he cannot count his distance, but quivers like a moth.

“Pest on this abominable early work!” muttered Carne with a yawn, as he groped his way through the deep gloom of black foliage, and entered the hollow of the ancient trunk; “it is all very well for sailors, but too hard upon a quiet gentleman. Very likely, that fellow won’t come for two hours. What a cursed uncomfortable, maggoty place! But I’ll have out the sleep he has robbed me of.” He stretched his long form on the rough bench inside,

gathered his cloak around him, and roused the dull echo of the honeycombed hollow, with long loud snores.

“Awake, my vigilant commander, and behold me! Happy are the landsmen, to whom the stars bring sleep. I have not slept for three nights; and the fruits are here for you.”

It was the lively voice of Renaud Charron; and the rosy fan of the dawn (unfolded over the sea and the gray rocks) glanced with a flutter of shade into the deep-ribbed tree. Affecting a lofty indifference, Carne, who had a large sense of his own dignity, rose slowly, and came out into the better light. “Sit down, my dear friend,” he said, taking the sealed packet, “there is bread and meat here, and a bottle of good Maçon. You are nearly always hungry, and you must be starved now.”

Charron perceived that his mouth was offered employment, at the expense of his eyes; but the kernel of the matter was his own already, and he smiled to himself at the mystery of his chief. “In this matter, I should implore the tree to crush me, if my father were an Englishman,” he thought; “but every one has his taste; it is no affair of mine.” Just as he was getting on good terms with his refreshment, Carne came back, and watched him with a patronising smile.

“You are the brother of my toil,” he said, “and I will tell you as much as it is good for you to know. A few hours now will complete our enterprise. Napoleon is at Boulogne again, and even he can scarcely restrain the rush of the spirits he has provoked. The first Division is on board already, with a week’s supplies, and a thousand horses, ready to sail, when a hand is held up. The hand will be held up at my signal—and that I shall trust you to convey to-night, as soon as I have settled certain matters. Where is that sullen young Tugwell? What have you done with him?”

“Wonderfully clever is your new device, my friend,” Charron replied, after a long pull at the bottle; “to vanquish the mind by a mind superior is a glory of high reason; but to let it remain in itself, and compel it to perform what is desired by the other, is a stroke of genius. And under your pharmacy, he must do it—that has been proved already. The idea was grand, very noble, magnificent. It never would have shown itself to my mind.”

“Probably not. When that has been accomplished, we will hang him for a traitor. But, my dear friend, I have sad news for you, even in this hour of triumph. The lady of your adoration, the Admiral’s elder daughter Faith, has recovered the man for whom she has waited

four years, and she means to marry him. The father has given his consent, and her pride is beyond description. She has long loved a mystery—what woman can help it? And now she has one for life—a husband eclipsed in his own hair. My Renaud, all rivalry is futile. Your hair, alas, is quite short and scanty. But this man has discovered in Africa a nut, which turns a man into the husk of himself. No wonder that he came out of the sea all dry ! ”

“Tush, he is a pig ! It is a pig that finds the nuts. I will be the butcher for that long pig, and the lady will rush into the arms of conquest. Then will I possess all the Admiral’s lands, and pursue the fine chase of the rabbits. And I will give dinners, such dinners, my faith ! Ha, that is excellent said—embrace me—my Faith will sit at the right side of the table, and explain to the English company that such dinners could proceed from nobody except a French gentleman, commingling all the knowledge of the joint with the loftier conception of the hash, the mince—the what you call ? Ah, you have no name for it, because you do not know the proper thing. Then in the presence of admiring Englishmen, I will lean back in my chair, the most comfortable chair that can be found——”

“Stop. You have got to get into it yet,”

Carne interrupted rudely ; “ and the way to do that, is not to lean back in it. The fault of your system has always been, that you want to enjoy everything, before you get it.”

“ And of yours,” retorted Charron, beginning to imbibe the pugnacity of an English landlord, “ that when you have got everything, you will enjoy what ? Nothing ! ”

“ Even a man of your levity hits the nail on the head sometimes,” said Carne, “ though the blow cannot be a very heavy one. Nature has not fashioned me for enjoyment, and therefore affords me very little. But some little I do expect in the great inversion coming, in the upset of the scoundrels who have fattened on my flesh, and stolen my land, to make country gentlemen—if it were possible—of themselves. It will take a large chimney to burn their title-deeds, for the robbery has lasted for a century. But I hold the great Emperor’s process signed for that ; and if you come to my cookery, you will say that I am capable of enjoyment. Fighting I enjoy not, as hot men do, nor guzzling, nor swigging, nor singing of songs ; for all of which you have a talent, my friend. But the triumph of quiet skill I like ; and I love to turn the balance on my enemies. Of these there are plenty, and among them all who live in that fishy little hole down there.”

Carne pointed contemptuously at Springhaven, that poor little village in the valley. But the sun had just lifted his impartial face above the last highland that balked his contemplation of the home of so many and great virtues; and in the brisk moisture of his early salute, the village in the vale looked lovely. For a silvery mist was flushed with rose, like a bridal veil warmed by the blushes of the bride; and the curves of the land, like a dewy palm leaf, shone and sank alternate.

“What a rare blaze they will make!” continued Carne, as the sunlight glanced along the russet thatch, and the blue smoke arose from the earliest chimney. “Every cottage there shall be a bonfire, because it has cast off allegiance to me. The whole race of Darling will be at my mercy—the pompous old Admiral, who refused to call on me, till his idiot of a son persuaded him—that wretched poetaster, who reduced me to the ignominy of reading his own rubbish to him—and the haughty young woman that worships a savage, who has treated me with insult. I have them all now in the hollow of my hand, and a thorough good crumpling is prepared for them. The first house to burn shall be Zebedee Tugwell’s, that conceited old dolt of a fishing fellow, who gives me a nod of suspicion, instead of pulling off his dirty hat to me. Then we blow

up the church, and old Twemlow's house, and the Admiral's, when we have done with it. The fishing-fleet, as they call their wretched tubs, will come home, with the usual fuss, to-night, and on Monday it shall be ashes. How like you my programme? Is it complete?"

"Too much, too much complete; too barbarous;" answered the kindly-hearted Frenchman. "What harm have all the poor men done to you? And what insanity to provoke enemies of the people all around, who would bring us things to eat! And worse—if the houses are consumed with fire, where will be the revenue that is designed for me, as the fair son of the Admiral? No, no, I will allow none of that. When the landing is made, you will not be my master. Soult will have charge of the subjects inferior, and he is not a man of rapine. To him will I address myself in favour of the village. Thus shall I ascend in the favour of my charming, and secure my property."

"Captain, I am your master yet, and I will have no interference. No more talk; but obey me to the letter. There is no sign of any rough weather, I suppose? You sailors see things which we do not observe."

"This summer has not been of fine weather, and the sky is always changing here. But there is not any token of a tempest now. Though there is a little prospect of rain always."

“If it rains, all the better, for it obscures the sea. You have fed enough now to last even you till the evening; or if not, you can take some with you. Remain to the westward, where the cliffs are higher, and look out especially for British ships of war, that may be appearing up Channel. Take this second spy-glass, it is quite strong enough. But first of all, tell Perkins to stand off again with the pilot-boat, as if he was looking out for a job, and if he sees even a frigate coming eastward, to run back and let you know, by a signal arranged between you. Dan Tugwell, I see, was shipped yesterday on board of *Præme* No. 801, a very handy vessel, which will lead the van; and five hundred will follow in her track on Sunday evening. My excellent uncle will be at the height of his eloquence, just when his favourite Sunday-schoolboy is bringing an addition to his congregation. But the church shall not be blown up until Monday, for fear of premature excitement. By Monday night, about two hundred thousand such soldiers as Britain could never produce will be able to quell any childish excitement, such as Great Britain is apt to give way to.”

“But what is for me, this same Saturday night? I like very much to make polite the people, and to marry the most beautiful and the richest; but not to kill more than there is to be helped.”

“The breaking of the egg may cut the fingers that have been sucked till their skin is gone. You have plagued me all along with your English hankerings, which in your post of trust are traitorous.”

Charron was accustomed to submit to the infinitely stronger will of Carne. Moreover his sense of discipline often checked the speed of his temper. But he had never been able to get rid of a secret contempt for his superior, as a traitor to the race to which he really belonged, at least in the Frenchman's opinion. And that such a man should charge him with treachery was more than his honest soul could quite endure; and his quick face flushed with indignation as he spoke.

“Your position, my Commander, does not excuse such words. You shall answer for them, when I am discharged from your command; which, I hope, will be the case next week. To be spoken of as a traitor by you is very grand.”

“Take it as you please;” Carne replied, with that cold contemptuous smile, which the other detested. “For the present, however, you will not be grand, but carry out the orders which I give you. As soon as it is dark, you will return, keep the pilot-boat in readiness for my last despatch, with which you will meet the frigate *Torche* about midnight, as arranged on Thursday. All that, and the signals you already understand.

Wait for me, by this tree; and I may go with you; but that will depend upon circumstances. I will take good care that you shall not be kept starving; for you may have to wait here three or four hours for me. But be sure that you do not go, until I come."

"But what am I to do, if I have seen some British ships, or Perkins has given me token of them?"

"Observe their course, and learn where they are likely to be at nightfall. There will probably be none. All I fear is that they may intercept the *Torche*. Farewell, my friend, and let your sense of duty subdue the small sufferings of temper."

CHAPTER XIII.

NEAR OUR SHORES.

“THIS is how it is,” said Captain Tugwell that same day to Erle Twemlow; “the folk they goes on with a thing, till a man as has any head left twists it round on his neck, with his chin looking down his starn-post. Then the enemy cometh, with his spy-glass and his guns, and afore he can look round, he hath nothing left to look for.”

“Then you think, Tugwell, that the danger is not over? That the French mean business even now, when every one is tired of hearing of it? I have been away so long, that I know nothing. But the universal opinion is——”

“Opinion of the universe be dashed!” Master Zebedee answered, with a puff of smoke. “We calls ourselves the universe, when we be the rope that drags astarn of it. Cappen, to my mind there is mischief in the wind, more than there hath been for these three years; and that’s why you see me here, instead of going with the

smacks. Holy Scripture saith a dream cometh from the Lord ; leastways, to a man of sense, as hardly ever dreameth. The wind was so bad again us, Monday afternoon, that we put off sailing till the Tuesday, and Monday night I lay on my own bed, without a thought of nothing but to sleep till five o'clock. I hadn't taken nothing but a quart of John Prater's ale—and you know what his measures is—not a single sip of grog, but the Hangel of the Lord he come and stand by me in the middle of the night. And he took me by the hand, or if he didn't it come to the same thing of my getting there, and he set me up in a dark high place the like of the yew-tree near Carne Castle. And then he saith, 'Look back, Zeb;' and I looked, and behold Springhaven was all afire, like the bottomless pit, or the thunderstorm of Egypt, or the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And two figures was jumping about in the flames, like the furnace in the plain of Dura, and one of them was young Squire Carne, and the other was my son Daniel, as behaveth below his name. And I called out 'Daniel, thou son of Zebedee and Kezia Tugwell, come forth from the burning fiery furnace;' but he answered not, neither heeded me. And then Squire Darling, Sir Charles is now the name of him, out he come from his Round-house, and by the white gate above high-water mark, to order

out the fire, because they was all his own cottages. But while he was going about, as he doth for fear of being hard upon any one, out jumps Squire Carne, from the thickest of the blazes, and takes the poor Squire by the fore part of his neck, which he liketh to keep open when he getteth off of duty, and away with him into the burning fiery furnace made of his own houses! That was more than I could put up with, even under the Hangel, and I give such a kick that Kezia, though she saith she is the most quietest of women, felt herself aforced to bounce me up."

"A dream of that sort deserves notice," answered Erle, who had passed many months among sailors; "and over and above that, I see proofs of a foolish security in England, and of sharp activity in France. Last Monday I was only five miles from Boulogne, on board of our frigate the *Melpomene*, for I wanted the captain's evidence to help me in my own affairs; and upon my word I was quite amazed at the massing of the French forces there, and the evident readiness of their hundreds of troop-ships. Scores of them even had horses on board, for I saw them quite clearly with a spy-glass. But the officers only laughed at me, and said they were tired of seeing that. And another thing I don't like at all is the landing of a French boat this side of

Pebbleridge. I was coming home after dark one night, and as soon as they saw me they pushed off, and pretended to be English fishermen; but if ever I saw Frenchmen, these were French; and I believe they had a ship not far away, for I saw a light shown and then turned off. I examined the place in the morning, and saw the footprints of men on a path up the cliff, as if they had gone inland towards Carne Castle. When the Admiral came home, I told him of it; but he seemed to think it was only some smuggling."

"Ah, there's smooglin' of a bad kind over there, to my belief. I wouldn't tell your honour not a quarter what I thinks, because of the young gentleman being near akin to you. But a thing or two have come to my ears, very much again' a young Squire over that way. A man as will do what he have done, is a black one in some ways; and if some, why not in all?"

"Tell me what you mean;" said Twemlow sternly. "After saying so much, you are bound to say more. Caryl Carne is no friend of mine, although he is my cousin. I dislike the man; though I know but little of him."

"For sartin then, a kind gentleman like you won't like him none the better for betraying of a nice young maid as put her trust in him, as lively and pretty a young maid as ever stepped, and

might have had the pick of all the young men in the parish."

"What!" exclaimed Erle, with a sudden chill of heart, for Faith had not concealed from him her anxiety about Dolly. "Tugwell, do you mean to say——"

"Yes, sir; only you must keep it to yourself, for the sake of the poor young thing; though too many knows it already, I'm afeared. And that was how poor Jem Cheeseman changed from a dapper, money-turning man, as pleasant as could be, to a down-hearted, stick-indoors, honest-weighted fellow. Poor little Polly was as simple as a dove, and her meant to break none of the Lord's commandments, unless it was a sin to look so much above her. He took her aboard her father's trading-craft, and made pretence to marry her across the water, her knowing nothing of the lingo, to be sure; and then when there come a thumping boy, and her demanded for the sake of the young 'un that her marriage should be sartified in the face of all the world, what does he do but turn round, and ask her if she was fool enough to suppose that a Carne had married a buttermen's daughter? With a few words more, she went off of her head, and have never been right again, they say; and her father, who was mighty proud to have a grandson heir to an old ancient castle, he was so took aback with

this disappointment, that he puzzled all the village, including of me, as I am free to own, by jumping into his own rope. 'Twas only now just that I heard all this; and as the captain of this here place, I shall ask leave of Cheeseman to have it out with Master Carne, as soon as may be done without hurting the poor thing. If she had been my child, the rope should have gone round his neck first, if it come to mine thereafter!"

"The —— villain!" Twemlow used a strong short word, without adding heavily, it may be hoped, to the score against him. "And to think that all this time he has been daring to address himself—but never mind that now. It will be a bad time for him, when I catch him by himself, though I must not speak of Polly. Poor little Polly, what a pretty child she was! I used to carry sugar-plums on purpose for her. Good-bye, Tugwell; I must think about all this."

"And so must I, sir. What a strapping chap a' be!" Captain Zebedee continued to himself, as Twemlow strode away with the light step of a mountain savage, carrying a long staff from force of habit, and looking even larger than himself, from the flow of chesnut hair and beard around him. "Never did see such a hairy chap. Never showed no signs of it, when a' was a lad, and Miss 'Liza quite smooth in the front of her neck. Must come of Hottentot climate, I

reckon. They calls it the bush, from the folk been so bushy. I used to think as my beard was a pretty good example; but Lord bless me and keep me, it would all go on his nose! If a' spreadeth that over the face of Squire Carne, a' will ravish him, as the wicked doth ravish the poor."

Twemlow had many sad things to consider, and among them the impending loss of this grand mane. After divers delays, and infinitude of forms, and much evidence of things self-evident—in the spirit which drove Sir Horatio Nelson to pin a certificate of amputation to the sleeve of his lost arm—this Twemlow had established that he was the Twemlow left behind upon the coast of Africa, and having been captured in the service of his country, was entitled at least to restoration. In such a case, small liberality was shown in those days, even as now prevaieth; the object of all in authority being to be hard upon those who are out of it. At last, when he was becoming well weary, and nothing but an Englishman's love of his country, and desire to help in her dangers, prevented him from turning to private pursuits—wherein he held a key to fortune—he found himself restored to his rank in the Army, and appointed to another regiment which happened to be short of officers. Then he flung to the winds, until

peace should return, his prospect of wealth beyond reckoning, and locked in a black leather trunk materials worth their weight in diamonds. But as life is uncertain, he told his beloved one the secret of his great discovery, which she, in sweet ignorance of mankind, regarded as of no importance.

But (as wars appear and disappear, nations wax and wane, and the holiest principles of one age become the scoff of the next, yet human nature is the same throughout) it would be wrong to cast no glance—even with the French so near our shores—at the remarkable discovery of this young man, and the circumstances leading up to it. For with keen insight into civilized thought, which yearns with the deepest remorse for those blessings which itself has banished, he knew that he held a master-key to the treasures of Cræsus, Mycerinus, Attalus, and every other king who has dazzled the world with his talents. The man who can minister to human needs may, when he is lucky, earn a little towards his own; the man who contributes to the pleasure of his fellows must find reward in his own; but he who can gratify the vanity of his race is the master of their pockets.

Twemlow had been carried from the deadly coast (as before related by Captain Southcombe) to the mountainous district far inland, by the

great King Golo of the Quackwas nation, mighty warriors of lofty stature. Here he was treated well, and soon learned enough of their simple language to understand and be understood; while the King, who considered all white men as of canine origin, was pleased with him, and prepared to make him useful. Then Twemlow was sent, with an escort of chiefs, to the land of the Houlas, as a medicine-man, to win Queen Mabonga for the great King Golo. But she—so strange is the perversity of women—beholding this man of a pearly tint, as fair as the moon, and as soft as a river—for he took many months to get properly tanned—with one long gaze of amazement yielded to him what he sought for another. A dwarf and a whipster he might be, among the great darkies around her—for he had only six feet and one inch of stature, and forty-two inches round the chest—but to her fine taste, tone and quality more than covered defect of quantity. The sight of male members of her race had never moved her, because she had heard of their wickedness; but the gaze of this white man, so tender and so innocent, set her on a long course of wondering about herself. Then she drew back, and passed into the private hut behind, where no one was allowed to disturb her. For she never had felt like this before, and she wanted nobody to notice it.

But the Houla maidens, with the deepest interest in matters that came home to them outside their understanding, held council with their mothers, and these imparted to the angelic stranger, as plainly as modesty permitted, the distressing results of his whiteness, and implored him to depart, before further harm was done. Twemlow perceived that he had tumbled into a difficult position, and the only way out of it was to make off. Giving pledges to return in two moons at the latest, he made his salaam to the sensitive young Queen, whose dignity was only surpassed by her grace, and expecting to be shortened by the head, returned with all speed to the great King Golo. Honesty is the best policy—as we all know so well that we forbear to prove it—and the Englishman saw that the tale would be darker from the lips of his black attendants. The negro monarch was of much-enduring mind, but these tidings outwent his philosophy. He ordered Twemlow's head to come off by dinner-time, and alas ! that royal household kept very early hours ; and the poor Captain, corded to a tree, sniffed sadly the growth of good roast, which he never should taste, and could only succeed in succession of fare. For although that enlightened king had discarded the taste of the nations around him, it was not half so certain as the prisoner could have wished that his prejudice

would resist the relish of a candid rival in prime condition.

While Twemlow was dwelling upon this nice question, and sympathising deeply with the animal on the spit, Tuloo, the head councillor of the realm, appeared, an ancient negro full of wisdom and resource. Discovering that the white man set more value on his head than is usual with these philosophers, he proposed conditions which were eagerly accepted, and releasing the captive, led him into his own hut. Here the man of wisdom spat three times into his very ample bosom, to exorcise evil spells, and took from a hole in the corner something which he handled very carefully, and with a touch as light as possible. Following everything with his best eyes, Twemlow perceived in the hand of Tuloo a spongy-looking substance of conical form, and in colour and size very like a morel, but possessing a peculiar golden glow. "Kneel here, my son, and move not until I tell you," the old man whispered, and was obeyed. Then he stripped off all covering from the white neck and shoulders, and beginning immediately below the eyes, brushed all the cheeks and the chin, throat and neck and upper part of the bosom with the substance in his hand, from which a yellow powder passed, moist rather than dusty, into the open pores. "In one moon you will be a beast

of the woods ; and in two you shall return to the Queen that loves you," said Councillor Tuloo, with a sly little grin.

But Twemlow was robbed of no self-respect by the growth of a forest about him ; and when he was sent again to Queen Mabonga, and the dewy glance of love died at the very first wink into a stony glare—because of his face being covered with hair—he said to himself that he knew where he could inflict a very different impression upon ladies. For these cannot have too much hair in England, at the back of their own heads, and front of their admirer's.

Councillor Tuloo was gifted with a deep understanding of a thing, which looks shallow to a man who has never yet heard of false bottoms. He said to King Golo, "I know what women are. As long as she never had thought about men, you might crawl, and be only a hog to her. But her eyes have been opened to this white man, and there is room for a black one to go into them. And unless you are at hand, it will be done by some one else."

In short, all was managed so beautifully, that in six more moons the coy Mabonga split the Durra straw with King Golo, amid vast rejoicings, and in din almost equal to that which a wedding in Wales arouses. But from time to time, it was considered needful to keep up Her

Majesty's repulsion, by serving Erle Twemlow with another dose of that, which would have created for the English fair capillary attraction. Thus he became a great favourite with the King, who listened with deep interest to his descriptions of the houseful of beads and buttons, to be earned in England by a little proper management of Tuloo's magic dust. Before very long it was arranged, that as soon as a good supply of *Pong* could be collected, Twemlow should be sent back to the coast, and placed under the charge of Bandeliah, who was now a tributary of this great king. And here he might have waited years and years—for the trading station was abandoned now—but for the benevolence of Captain Southcombe, who being driven to the eastward of his course upon one of his returns from India, stood in a little further to enquire about his friend, and with no small pleasure conveyed him home.

CHAPTER XIV.

NO DANGER, GENTLEMEN.

THE little dinner at Springhaven Hall, appointed for that same Saturday, had now grown into a large one. Carne had refused Dolly's offer to get him an invitation, and for many reasons he was not invited. He ought to have been glad of this, because he did not want to be there; but his nature, like a saw's, was full of teeth, and however he was used, he grated. But without any aid of his teeth, a good dinner, well planned and well served, bade fair in due course to be well digested also, by forty at least of the forty-two people who sat down to consider it. For as yet the use of tongue was understood, and it was not allowed to obstruct by perpetual motion the duties of the palate. And now every person in the parish of "culture"—which seems to be akin to the Latin for a knife, though a fork expels nature more forcibly,—as well as many others of locality less favoured, joined in this muster of good people and good things. At the outset,

the Admiral had intended nothing more than a quiet recognition of the goodness of the Lord, in bringing home a husband for the daughter of the house ; but what Englishman can forbear the pleasure of killing two birds with one stone ?

It was Stubbard who first suggested this ; and Sir Charles at once saw the force of it, especially with the Marquis of Southdown coming. Captain Stubbard had never admired anybody, not even himself—without which there is no happiness—much less Mr. Pitt, or Lord Nelson, or the King, until justice was done to the race of Stubbard, and their hands were plunged into the Revenue. But now, ever since the return of the war to its proper home in England, this captain had been paid well for doing the very best thing that a man can do, *i.e.*, nothing. He could not help desiring to celebrate this, and as soon as he received his invitation, he went to the host and put it clearly. The Admiral soon entered into his views, and as guests were not farmed by the head as yet at tables entertaining self-respect, he perceived the advantage of a good dinner scored to his credit with forty, at the cost of twenty ; and Stubbard's proposal seemed thoroughly well-timed ; so long was it now since the leaders of Defence had celebrated their own vigilance. Twenty-two, allowing for the ladies needful, were thus added to the score of chairs

intended, and the founder of the feast could scarcely tell, whether the toast of the evening was to be the return of the traveller, or the discomfiture of Boney. That would mainly depend upon the wishes of the Marquis; and these again were likely to be guided by the treatment he had met with from the Government lately, and the commanders of his Division.

This nobleman was of a character not uncommon eighty years ago, but now very rare among public men, because a more flexible fibre has choked it. Steadfast, honourable, simple and straight-forward, able to laugh without bitterness at the arrogant ignorance of mobs, but never to smile at the rogues who led them, scorning all shuffle of words, foul haze, and snaky maze of evasion, and refusing to believe at first sight that his Country must be in the wrong, and her enemies in the right, he added to all these exterminated foibles a leisurely dignity now equally extinct. Trimmers, time-servers, and hypocrites feared him, as thieves fear an honourable dog; and none could quote his words against one another. This would have made him unpopular now, when perjury means popularity. For the present however self-respect existed; and no one thought any the worse of his lordship for not having found him a liar. Especially with ladies (who insist on

truth in men, as a pleasant proof of their sex) Lord Southdown had always been a prime favourite, and an authority largely misquoted. And to add to his influence, he possessed a quick turn of temper, which rendered it very agreeable to agree with him.

Lord Southdown was thinking, as he led Miss Darling to her chair at the head of the table, that he never had seen a more pleasing young woman ; though he grieved at her taste, in preferring the brown young man on her left to his elegant friend Lord Dashville. Also he marvelled at hearing so much, among the young officers of his acquaintance, concerning the beauty of the younger sister, and so little about this far sweeter young person—at least in his opinion. For verily Dolly was not at her best ; her beautiful colour was gone, her neck had lost its sprightly turn, and her large gray eyes moved heavily instead of sparkling. “That girl has some burden upon her mind,” he thought, as he watched her with interest and pity ; “she has put on her dress anyhow, and she does not even look to see who is looking at her !”

For the “Belle of all Sussex,” as the young sparks entitled her, was ill at ease with herself, and ready to quarrel with every one except herself. She had conscience enough to confess, whenever she could not get away from

it, that for weeks and months she had been slipping far, and further, from the true and honest course. Sometimes, with a pain like a stitch in the side, the truth would spring upon her; and perhaps for a moment she would wonder at herself, and hate the man misleading her. But this happened chiefly when he was present, and said or did something to vex her; and then he soon set it to rights again, and made everything feel delightful. And this way of having her misgivings eased made them easier, when they came again with no one to appease them. For she began to think of what he had done, and how kind and considerate his mind must be, and how hard it must seem to mistrust him.

Another thing that urged her to keep on now, without making any fuss about it, was the wonderful style her sister Faith had shown, since that hairy monster came back again. It was manifest that the world contained only one man of any high qualities, and nobody must dare to think even twice about any conclusion he laid down. He had said to her, with a penetrating glance—and it must have been that to get through such a thicket—that dangerous people were about, and no girl possessing any self-respect must think of wandering on the shore alone. The more she was spied upon and admonished, the more she would do what she

thought right ; and a man who had lived among savages for years, must be a queer judge of propriety. But in spite of all these defiant thoughts, her heart was very low, and her mind in a sad flutter, and she could not even smile as she met her father's gaze. Supposing that she was frightened at the number of the guests, and the noise of many tongues, and the grandeur of the people, the gentle old man made a little signal to her, to come and have a whisper with him, as a child might do, under courtesy of the good company. But Dolly feigned not to understand, at the penalty of many a heart-pang.

The dinner went on with a very merry sound, and a genuine strength of enjoyment ; such as hearty folk have, who know one another, and are met together, not to cut capers of wit, but refresh their good will and fine principles. And if any dinner-party can be so arranged, that only five per cent. has any trouble on its mind, the gentleman who whips away the plates, at a guinea a mouth, will have to go home with a face of willow pattern.

The other whose mind was away from her food, and reckless of its own nourishment, was Blyth Scudamore's mother, as gentle a lady as ever tried never to think of herself. In spite of all goodness, and faith in the like, she had enough to make her very miserable now, when-

ever she allowed herself to think about it, and that was fifty-nine minutes out of sixty. For a brief account of her son's escape from Etaples had reached her, through the kindness of Captain Desportes, who found means to get a letter delivered to the Admiral. That brave French officer spoke most highly of the honourable conduct of his English friend, but had very small hope of his safety. For he added the result of his own inquiries to the statement of M. Jalais; and from these it was clear that poor Scuddy had set forth, alone in a rickety boat, ill-found, and ill-fitted to meet even moderate weather in the open Channel. Another young Englishman had done the like, after lurking in the forest of Hardelot, but he had been recaptured by the French, at the outset of his hopeless voyage. Scudamore had not been so retaken; and the Captain (who had not received his letter, until it was too late to interfere, by reason of his own despatch to Dieppe) had encountered a sharp summer gale just then, which must have proved fatal to the poor old boat. The only chance was that some English ship might have picked up the wanderer; and if so, the highly respected Admiral would have heard of it, before he received this letter. As no such tidings had been received, there could be little doubt about the issue in any reasonable mind. But the heart of a woman

is not a mind, or the man that is born of her might as well forego the honour.

However, as forty people were quite happy, the wisest course is to rejoin them. The ladies were resolved upon this occasion to storm the laws of usage, which required their withdrawal before the toasts began; and so many gentle voices challenged the garrison of men behind their bottles, that terms of unusual scope were arranged. It was known that the Marquis would make a fine speech—short, and therefore all the finer—in proposing the toast of the evening, to wit, “Our King, and our Country.” Under the vigorous lead of Mrs. Stubbard, the ladies demanded to hear every word; after which they would go, and discuss their own affairs, or possibly those of their neighbours. But the gentlemen must endure their presence, till his lordship had spoken, and the Admiral replied. Faith was against this arrangement, because she foresaw that it would make them very late; but she yielded to the wishes of so many of her guests, consoled with the thought that she would be supported, by some one on her left hand, who would be her support for life.

When all had done well, except the two aforesaid, and good will born of good deeds was crowning comfort with jocund pleasure, and the long oak table, rich of grain and dark with the

friction of a hundred years, shone in the wavering flow of dusk, with the gleam of purple and golden fruit, the glance of brilliant glass that puzzles the light with its claim to shadow, and the glow of amber and amethyst wine decanted to settle that question—then the bold Admiral standing up, said, “Bring in the lights, that we may see his lordship.”

“I like to speak to some intelligence ;” said the guest, who was shrewd at an answer. And Dolly, being quick at occasion, seized it, and in the shifting of chairs, left her own for some one else.

The curtains were drawn across the western window, to close the conflict between God’s light and man’s; and then this well-known gentleman, having placed his bottle handily—for he never “put wine into two whites,” to use his own expression—arose with his solid frame as tranquil as a rock, and his full-fronted head like a piece of it. Every gentleman bowed to his bow, and waited with silent respect for his words, because they would be true and simple.

“My friends, I will take it for granted that we all love our Country, and hate its enemies. We may like and respect them personally, for they are as good as we are; but we are bound to hate them collectively, as men who would

ruin all we love. For the stuff that is talked about freedom, democracy, march of intellect, and so forth, I have nothing to say, except to bid you look at the result among themselves. Is there a man in France, whose body is his own if he can carry arms, or his soul, if it ventures to seek its own good? As for mind,—there is only the mind of one man; a large one in many ways; in others a small one, because it considers its owner alone.

“But we of England have refused to be stripped of all that we hold dear, at the will of a foreign upstart. We have fought for years, and we still are fighting, without any brag or dream of glory, for the rights of ourselves and of all mankind. There have been among us weak-minded fellows, babblers of abstract nonsense, and even, I grieve to say—traitors. But on the whole, we have stood together, and therefore have not been trodden on. How it may end is within the knowledge of the Almighty only; but already there are signs that we shall be helped, if we continue to help ourselves.

“And now for the occasion of our meeting here. We rejoice most heartily with our good host, the vigilant Defender of these shores, at the restoration to his arms—or rather, to a still more delightful embrace—of a British officer, who has proved a truth we knew already, that

nothing stops a British officer. I see a gentleman struck so keenly with the force of that remark, because he himself has proved it, that I must beg his next neighbour to fill up his glass, and allow nothing to stop him from tossing it off. And as I am getting astray from my text, I will clear my poor head, with what you can see through."

The Marquis of Southdown filled his glass from a bottle of grand old Chambertin—six of which had been laid most softly in a cupboard of the wainscote for his use—and then he had it filled again, and saw his meaning brilliantly.

"Our second point is the defeat of the Invasion; and of this we may now assure ourselves. They have not been defeated, for the very good reason that they never would come out to fight; but it comes to the same thing, because they are giving it over, as a hopeless job. I have seen too many ups and downs, to say that we are out of danger yet; but when our fleets have been chasing theirs all over the world, are they likely to come and meet us in our own waters? Nelson has anchored at Spithead, and is rushing up to London,—as our host has heard to-day—with his usual impetuosity. Every man must stick to his own business, even the mighty Nelson; and he might not meddle with Billy Blue, or anybody else up Channel.

Still, Nelson is not the sort of man to jump into a chaise at Portsmouth, if there was the very smallest chance of the French coming over to devour us.

“ Well, my friends, we have done our best, and have some right to be proud of it ; but we should depart from our nature, if we even exercised that right. The nature of an Englishman is this—to be afraid of nothing, but his own renown. Feeling this great truth, I will avoid offence, by hiding as a crime my admiration of the glorious soldiers and sailors here, yet beg them for once to remember themselves, as having enabled me to propose, and all present to pledge, the welfare of our King and Country.”

The Marquis waved his glass above his head, without spilling a single drop, although it was a bumper, then drained it at a draught, inverted it, and cleverly snapped it in twain upon the table, with his other hand laid on his heart, and a long low reverence to the company. Thereupon, up stood squires and dames, and repeating the good toast pledged it, with a deep bow to the proposer ; and as many of the gentlemen as understood the art, without peril to fair neighbours, snapped the glass.

His lordship was delighted, and in the spirit of the moment held up his hand, which meant—
“ Silence, silence, till we all sing the National

Anthem!" In a clear loud voice he led off the strain; Erle Twemlow from his hairy depths struck in; then every man following as he might, and with all his might, sustained it, and the ladies, according to their wont, gave proof of the heights they can scale upon rapture.

The Admiral standing, and beating time now and then with his heel—though all the time deserved incessant beating—enjoyed the performance a great deal more than if it had been much better, and joined in the main roar as loudly as he thought his position as host permitted. For although he was nearing the haven now of three score years and ten, his throat and heart were so sea-worthy, that he could very sweetly have outroared them all. But while he was preparing just to prove this, if encouraged, and smiling very pleasantly at a friend who cried "Strike up, Admiral," he was called from the room, and in the climax of the roar slipped away for a moment, unheeded, and meaning to make due apology to his guests, upon his return to them.

CHAPTER XV.

DISCHARGED FROM DUTY.

WHILE loyalty thus rejoiced, and throve in the warmth of its own geniality, a man who was loyal to himself alone, and had no geniality about him, was watching with contempt these British doings. Carne had tethered his stout black horse, who deserved a better master, in a dusky dell of dark-winged trees, at the back of the eastern shrubbery. Here the good horse might rest unseen, and consider the mysterious ways of men ; for the main approach was by the western road, and the shades of evening stretched their arms to the peaceful yawn of sunset. And here he found good stuff spread by nature, more worthy of his attention, and tucking back his fore-legs, fared as well as the iron between his teeth permitted.

Then the master drew his green riding coat of thin velvet closer round him, and buttoned the lappet in front, because he had heavy weight in the pockets. Keeping warily along the lines

of shadow, he gained a place of vantage in the shrubbery, a spot of thick shelter having loops of outlook. Above and around him hung a curtain of many-pointed ilex, and before him a barberry bush, whose coral clusters caught the waning light. In this snug nook he rested calmly, leaning against the ilex trunk, and finished his little preparations for anything adverse to his plans. In a belt, which was hidden by his velvet coat, he wore a short dagger in a sheath of shagreen, and he fixed it so that he could draw it in a moment, without unfastening the riding-coat. Then, from the pockets on either side, he drew a pair of pistols, primed them well from a little flask, and replaced them with the butts beneath the lappets. "Death for at least three men," he muttered, "if they are fools enough to meddle with me. My faith, these Darlings are grown very grand, on the strength of the land that belongs to us!"

For he heard the popping of champagne corks, and the clink of abundant silver, and tuning of instruments by the band; and he saw the flash of lights, and the dash of serving men, and the rush of hot hospitality; and although he had not enough true fibre in his stomach to yearn for a taste of the good things going round, there can be little doubt from what he did thereafter, that his gastric juices must have turned to gall.

With all these sounds, and sights, and scents of things that he had no right to despise, his patience was tried for an hour and a half, or at any rate he believed so. The beautiful glow in the west died out, where the sun had been ripening his harvest-field of sheafy gold and awny cloud ; and the pulse of quivering dusk beat slowly, so that a man might seem to count it—or rather a child who sees such things, which later men lose sight of. The forms of the deepening distances against the departure of light grew faint, and prominent points became obscure, and lines retired into masses ; while Carne maintained his dreary watch, with his mood becoming darker. As the sound of joyful voices, and of good will doubled by good fare, came to his unfed vigil from the open windows of the dining-room, his heart was not enlarged at all, and the only solace for his lips was to swear at British revelry. For the dining-room was at the western end, some fifty yards away from him, and its principal window faced the sunset ; but his lurking-place afforded a view of the southern casements obliquely. Through these he had seen that the lamps were brought, and heard the increase of merry noise, the clapping of hands, and the jovial cheers at the rising of the popular Marquis.

At last he saw a white kerchief waved at the window nearest to him—the window of the

Admiral's little study, which opened like a double door upon the eastern grass-plat. With an ill-conditioned mind, and body stiff and lacking nourishment, he crossed the grass in a few long strides, and was admitted without a word.

"What a time you have been! I was giving it up;" he whispered to the trembling Dolly "Where are the candles? I must strike a light. Surely you might have brought one. Bolt the door, while I make a light; and close the curtains quietly; but leave the window open. Don't shake, like a child that is going to be whipped. Too late now for nonsense. What are you afraid of? Silly child!"

As he spoke, he was striking a light in a little French box containing a cube of jade, and with very little noise he lit two candles standing on the high oak desk. Dolly drew a curtain across the window, and then went softly to the door, (which opened at the corner of a narrow passage) and made pretence to bolt it, but shot the bolt outside the socket.

"Come and let me look at you," said Carne; for he knew that he had been rough with her, and she was not of the kind that submits to that. "Beauty, how pale you look, and yet how perfectly lovely in this evening gown! I should like to kill the two gentlemen who sat next to you at dinner. Darling, you know that whatever I do, is only for your own sweet sake."

“If you please not to touch me, it will be better;” said the lady, not in a whisper, but a firm and quiet voice, although her hands were trembling; “you are come upon business; and you should do it.”

If Carne had but caught her in his arms, and held her to his heart, and vowed that all business might go to the devil, while he held his angel so, possibly the glow of nobler feelings might have been lost in the fire of passion. But he kept his selfish end alone in view, and neglected the womanly road to it.

“A despatch from London arrived to-day. I must see it;” he said shortly; “as well as the copy of the answer sent. And then my beauty must insert a *not*, in the order to be issued in the morning, or otherwise invert its meaning; simply to save useless bloodshed. The key for a moment the key, my darling, of this fine old piece of furniture!”

“Is it likely that I would give you the key? My father always keeps it. What right have you with his private desk? I never promised anything so bad as that.”

“I am not to be trifled with;” he whispered sternly. “Do you think, that I came here for kissing? The key I must have, or break it open; and how will you explain that away?”

His rudeness settled her growing purpose.

The misery of indecision vanished; she would do what was right, if it cost her life. Her face was as white as her satin dress; but her dark eyes flashed with menace.

“There is a key that opens it,” she said, as she pointed to the book-case; “but I forbid you to touch it, sir.”

Carne’s only reply was to snatch a key from the upper glass-door of the book-shelves,—a key that would open the Admiral’s desk, though the owner was not aware of it. In a moment, the intruder had unlocked the high and massive standing-desk, thrown back the cover, and placed one candlestick among the documents. Many of these he brushed aside, as useless for his purpose, and became bewildered among the rest; for the Commander of the Coast-defence was not a man of order. He never knew where to put a thing, nor even where it might have put itself, but found a casual home for any paper that deserved it. This lack of method has one compensation, like other human defects; to wit, that it puzzles a clandestine searcher more deeply than cypher or cryptogram. Carne had the Admiral’s desk as wide as an oyster thrown back on his valve, and just being undertucked with the knife, to make him go down easily. Yet so great was the power of disorder, that nothing could be made out of anything. “Watch

at the door," he had said to Dolly; and this suited her intention.

For while he was thus absorbed, with his back towards her, she opened the door a little, and presently saw the trusty Charles come hurrying by, as if England hung upon his labours. "Tell my father to come here this moment; go softly, and say that I sent you." As she finished her whisper, she closed the door, without any sound, and stood patiently.

"Show me where it is; come and find it for me. Everything here is in the vilest mess;" cried Carne, growing reckless with wrath and hurry. "I want the despatch of this morning; and I find tailors' bills, way to make waterproof blacking, a list of old women, and a stump of old pipe! Come here, this instant, and show me where it is."

"If you forget your good manners," answered Dolly, still keeping in the dark near the door, "I shall have to leave you. Surely you have practice enough in spying, to find what you want, with two candles."

Carne turned for a moment, and stared at her. Her attitude surprised him; but he could not believe in her courage to rebel. She stood with her back to the door, and met his gaze without a sign of fear.

"There are no official papers here," he said,

after another short ransack ; “there must have been some if this desk is the one. Have you dared to delude me by showing the wrong desk ? ”

Dolly met his gaze still, and then walked towards him. The band had struck up, and the company were singing (with a fine patriotic roar which rang very nobly in the distance) “Britannia, rule the waves ! ” Dolly felt like a Briton, as the words rolled through her, and the melody lifted her proud heart.

“You have deluded yourself,” she said, standing proudly before the baffled spy ; “you have ransacked my father’s *private* desk ; which I allowed you to do, because my father has no secrets. He leaves it open half the time, because he is a man of honour. He is not a man of plots, and wiles, and trickery upon women. And you have deluded yourself, in dreaming that a daughter of his would betray her Country.”

“By the God that made me, I will have your life ; ” cried Carne in French, as he dashed his hand under his coat to draw his dagger ; but the pressure of the desk had displaced that, so that he could not find it. She thought that her time was come, and shrieked—for she was not at all heroic, and loved life very dearly—but she could not take her eyes from his, nor turn to fly from the spell of them. All she could do was to step back ; and she stepped back into her father’s arms.

“Ho!” cried the Admiral, who had entered with a smile of good cheer, and good company, glowing on his fine old countenance; “my Dolly and a stranger at my private desk! Mr. Carne! I have had a glass or two of wine, but my eyes must be playing me extraordinary tricks. A gentleman searching my desk, and apparently threatening my dear daughter! Have the kindness to explain, before you attempt to leave us.”

If the curtain had not been drawn across the window, Carne would have made his escape, and left the situation to explain itself. But the stuff was thick, and it got between his legs; and before he could slip away, the stout old Admiral had him by the collar, with a sturdy grasp attesting the substance of the passing generation. And a twinkle of good humour was in the old eyes still,—such a wonder was his Dolly, that he might be doing wrong in laying hands of force upon a visitor of hers. Things as strange as this had been within his knowledge, and proved to be of little harm—with forbearance. But his eyes grew stern, as Carne tried to dash his hand off.

“If you value your life, you will let me go.” Said the young man to the old one.

“I will not let you go, sir, till you clear up this. A gentleman must see that he is bound to

clear himself. If I prove to be wrong, I will apologise. What! Are you going to fire at me? You would never be such a coward!"

He dropped upon the floor, with a bullet in his brain, and his course of duty ended. Carne dashed aside the curtain, and was nearly through the window, when two white arms were cast round his waist. He threw himself forward, with all his might, and wrenched at the little hands clasped around him, but they held together like clenched iron. "Will you force me to kill you?" "You may, if you like"—was the dialogue of these lovers.

The strength of a fit was in her despair. She set her bent knees against the window-frame, and a shower of glass fell between them; but she flinched not from her convulsive grasp.

"Let me come back, that I may shoot myself," Carne panted, for his breath was straitened. "What is life to me, after losing you?"

She made no answer, but took good care not to release so fond a lover. Then he threw himself back with all his weight, and she fell on the floor beneath him. Her clasp relaxed, and he was free; for her eyes had encountered her father's blood, and she swooned away, and lay as dead.

Carne arose quickly, and bolted the door. His breath was short, and his body trembling;

but the wits of the traitor were active still. "I must have something to show for all this," he thought as he glanced at the bodies on the floor; "those revellers may not have heard this noise. I know where it is now; and I will get it."

But the sound of the pistol, and shriek of the girl, had rung through the guests, when the wine was at their lips, and friends were nodding to one another. Faith sprang up, and then fell back trembling, and several men ran towards the door. Charles, the footman, met them there, with his face whiter than his napkin, and held up his hands, but could not speak. Erle Twemlow dashed passed him and down the passage; and Lord Southdown said, "Gentlemen, see to the ladies. There has been some little mishap, I fear. Bob, and Arthur, come with me."

Twemlow was first at the study-door, and finding it fastened, struck with all his force, and shouted, at the very moment when Carne stood before the true desk of office. "Good door, and good bolt!" muttered Carne; "my rule is never to be hurried by noises. Dolly will be quiet for a quarter of an hour; and the old gentleman for ever. All I want is about two minutes."

Twemlow stepped back a few yards, and then with a good start delivered a rushing kick; but

the only result was a jar of his leg through the sole of his thin dress-sandal.

"The window!" cried the Marquis, "we'll stop here; you know the house, take the shortest cut to the window. Whoever is there, we shall have him so. I am too slow. Boy Bob, go with him."

"What a fool I was not to think of that!" shouted Twemlow, as he set off for the nearest house-door; and unluckily Carne heard him. He had struck up the ledge of the desk, with the butt of the pistol he had fired, and pocketing a roll of fresh despatches, he strode across the body of the Admiral; and with a glance at Dolly—whose eyes were wide open, but her face drawn aside, like a peach with a split stone—out he went. He smiled as he heard the thundering of full-bodied gentlemen against the study-door, and their oaths, as they damaged their knuckles and knee-caps. Then he set off hot-foot; but was stopped by a figure advancing from the corner of the house.

This was not a graceful figure, as of gentle maiden, nor venerable and slow of foot, as that of an ancient mariner; but a man in the prime of strength, and largely endowed with that blessing—the mate of truth. Carne perceived that he had met his equal, and perhaps his better, in a bout of muscle; and he tried to escape by superior mind.

“Twemlow, how glad I am that I have met you! You are the very man I wanted. There has been a sad accident in there, with one of the Admiral’s pistols, and the dear old man is badly wounded. I am off for a doctor, for my horse is at hand. For God’s sake, run in, and hold his head up, and try to staunch the bleeding. I shall be back, in half an hour, with the man that lives at Pebbleridge. Don’t lose a moment. Particulars hereafter.”

“Particulars now!” replied Twemlow sternly, as he planted himself before his cousin. “On the West Coast, I lived among liars, and they called a lie *Crom*, and worshipped it. If this is not *Crom*, why did you bolt the door?”

“You shall answer for this, when time allows. If the door was bolted, he must have done it. Let me pass; the last chance depends on my speed.”

Carne made a rush to pass; but Twemlow caught him by the breast, and held him. “Come back,” he said fiercely, “and prove your words. Without that, you go no further.”

Carne seized him by the throat, but Erle’s mighty beard, like a collar of hemp, protected him, and he brought his big brown fist, like a hammer, upon the traitor’s forehead. Carne wrenched at his dagger, but failed to draw it; and the two strong men rolled on the grass,

fighting like two bulldogs. Reason, and thought, and even sense of pain, were lost in brutal fury, —as they writhed, and clutched, and dug at one another, gashing their knuckles, and gnashing their teeth, frothing with one another's blood, for Carne bit like a tiger. At length, tough condition and power of endurance got the mastery, and Twemlow planted his knee upon the gasping breast of Carne.

“Surrend;” he said, for his short breath could not fetch up the third syllable; and Carne (with a sign of surrender) lay on his back, and put his chin up, and shut his eyes as if he had fainted. Twemlow, with self-congratulation, waited a little to recover breath, still keeping his knee in the post of triumph, and pinning the foe's right arm to his side. But the foe's left hand was free; and with the eyes still shut, and a continuance of gasping, that left hand stole its way to the left pocket, quietly drew forth the second pistol, pressed back the hammer on the grass, and with a flash (both of eyes and of flint) fired into the victor's forehead. The triumphant knee rolled off the chest; the body swung over, as a log is rolled by the woodman's crowbar; and Twemlow's back was on the grass, and his eyes were closed to the moonlight.

Carne scrambled up, and shook himself, to be sure that all his limbs were sound. “Ho, ho,

ho!" he chuckled, "it is not so easy to beat me. Why, who are you? Down with you, then!"

Lord Robert Chancton, a lad of about sixteen, the eldest son of the Marquis, had lost his way inside the house, in trying to find a short cut to the door, and coming up after the pistol was fired, made a very gallant rush at the enemy. With a blow of the butt, Carne sent him sprawling; then, dashing among the shrubs and trees in another minute was in the saddle, and galloping towards the ancestral ruins.

As he struck into the main road through the grounds, Carne passed, and just missed (by a turn of the bridle) another horseman ascending the hill, and urging a weary animal. The faces of the men shot past each other, within a short yard, and gaze met gaze; but neither in the dark flash knew the other, for a big tree barred the moonlight. But Carne, in another moment, thought that the man who had passed must be Scudamore, probably fraught with hot tidings. And the thought was confirmed, as he met two troopers riding as hard as ride they might; and then saw the beacon on the headland flare.

From point to point, and from height to height, like a sprinkle of blood, the red light ran; and the roar of guns from the moonlit sea made echo that they were ready. Then

the rub-a-dub-dub of the drum arose, and the thrilling blare of trumpet; the great deep of the night was heaved, and broken, with the stir of human storm; and the staunchest and strongest piece of earth—our England, was ready to defend herself.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAY OUT OF IT.

“MY father, my father! I must see my father. Who are you, that dare to keep me out? Let me know the worst, and try to bear it. What are any of you to him?”

“But, my dear child,” Lord Southdown answered, holding the door against poor Faith, as she strove to enter the room of death; “wait just one minute, until we have lifted him to the sofa, and let us bring your poor sister out.”

“I have no sister. She has killed my father; and the best thing she can do is to die. I feel that I could shoot her, if I had a pistol. Let me see him, where he lies.”

“But, my poor dear, you must think of others. Your dear father is beyond all help. Your gallant lover lies on the grass. They hope to bring him round, God willing! Go where you can be of use.”

“How cruel you are! You must want to

drive me mad. Let his father and mother see to him, while I see to my own father. If you had a daughter, you would understand. Am I crying? Do I even tremble?"

The Marquis offered his arm, and she took it in fear of falling, though she did not tremble; so he led her to her father's last repose. The poor Admiral lay by the open window, with his head upon a stool which Faith had worked. The ghastly wound was in his broad smooth forehead, and his fair round cheeks were white with death. But the heart had not quite ceased to beat, and some remnant of the mind still hovered somewhere in the lacerated brain. Stubbard, sobbing like a child, was lifting and clumsily chafing one numb hand; while his wife, who had sponged the wound, was making the white curls wave with a fan she had shaped from a long official paper found upon the floor.

Dolly was recovering from her swoon, and sat upon a stool by the bookcase, faintly wondering what had happened, but afraid to ask or think. The corner of the bookcase, and the burly form of Stubbard, concealed the window from her, and the torpid oppression which ensues upon a fit lay between her and her agony. Faith, as she passed, darted one glance at her, not of pity, not of love, but of cold contempt and satisfaction at her misery.

Then Faith, the quiet and gentle maid, the tranquil and the self-controlled, (whom everyone had charged with want of heart, because she had borne her own grief so well) stood with the body of her father at her feet, and uttered an exceeding bitter cry. The others had seen enough of grief, as every human being must, but nothing half so sad as this. They feared to look at her face, and durst not open lips to comfort her.

“Don’t speak. Don’t look at him. You have no right here. When he comes to himself, he will want none but me. I have always done everything for him, since dear mother died; and I shall get him to sit up. He will be so much better, when he sits up. I can get him to do it, if you will only go. Oh, father, father, it is your own Faith come to make you well, dear, if you will only look at me!”

As she took his cold limp hand, and kissed it, and wiped a red splash from his soft white hair, the dying man felt, by nature’s feeling, that he was being touched by a child of his. A faint gleam flitted through the dimness of his eyes, which he had not the power to close; and the longing to say “farewell” contended with the drooping of the under lip. She was sure that he whispered, “Bless you, darling!” though nobody else could have made it out; but a

sudden rush of tears improved her hearing ; as rain brings higher voices down.

“Dolly, too!” he seemed to whisper next; and Faith made a sign to Mrs. Stubbard. Then Dolly was brought, and fell upon her knees, at the other side of her father, and did not know how to lament as yet, and was scarcely sure of having anything to mourn. But she spread out her hands, as if for somebody to take them, and bowed her pale face, and closed her lips, that she might be rebuked without answering.

Her father knew her; and his yearning was not to rebuke, but to bless and comfort her. He had forgotten everything, except that he was dying, with a daughter at each side of him. This appeared to make him very happy, about everything, except those two. He could not be expected to have much mind left; but the last of it was busy for his children’s good. Once more he tried to see them both, and whispered his last message to them—“forgive and love each other.”

Faith bowed her head, as his fell back, and silently offered to kiss her sister; but Dolly neither moved nor looked at her. “As you please,” said Faith; “and perhaps you would like to see a little more of your handiwork?”

For even as she spoke, her lover’s body was carried past the window, with his father and

mother on either side, supporting his limp arms and sobbing. Then Dolly arose, and with one hand grasping the selvage of the curtain, looked steadily at the face of her dead father. There were no tears in her eyes, no sign of anguish in her face, no proof that she knew, or felt what she had done. And, without a word, she left the room.

“Hard to the last, even hard to you!” cried Faith, as her tears fell upon the cold forehead. “Oh, darling, how could you have loved her so?”

“It is not hardness; it is madness. Follow your sister,” Lord Southdown said; “we have had calamities enough.”

But Faith was fighting with all her strength against an attack of hysterics, and fetching long gasps to control herself. “I will go,” replied Mrs. Stubbard, “this poor child is quite unfit. What on earth is become of Lady Scudamore? A doctor’s widow might have done some good.”

The doctor’s widow was doing good elsewhere. In the first rush from the dining-room, Lady Scudamore had been pushed back by no less a person than Mrs. Stubbard; when at last she reached the study-door, she found it closed against her, and entering the next room saw the flash of the pistol fired at Twemlow. Bravely hurrying to the spot, by the nearest outlet she could find, she became at once entirely occupied

with this new disaster. For two men, who ran up with a carriage-lamp, declared that the gentleman was as dead as a door-nail, and hastened to make good their words by swinging him up heels over head. But the lady made them set him down, and support his head, while she bathed the wound, and sent to the house for his father and mother, and when he could be safely brought indoors, helped with her soft hands beneath his hair, and then became so engrossed with him, that the arrival of her long-lost son was for several hours unknown to her.

For so many things coming all at once were enough to upset any one. Urgent despatches came hot for the hand that now was cold for ever; not a moment to lose, when time had ceased for the man who was to urge it. There were plenty of officers there; but no one clearly entitled to take command. Moreover, the public service clashed with the impulse or panic of the visitors. Some were for rushing to the stables, mounting every horse that could be found, and scouring the country, sword in hand, for that infernal murderer. Some, having just descried the flash of beacon from the headland, and heard the alarm-guns from shore and sea, were for hurrying to their regiments, or ships, or homes and families (according to the head-quarters of their life); while others put their coats on, to

ride for all the doctors in the county, who should fetch back the Admiral to this world, that he might tell everybody what to do. Scudamore stood with his urgent despatches in the large well-candled hall, and vainly desired to deliver them. "Send for the Marquis," suggested some one.

Lord Southdown came, without being sent for; "I shall take this duty upon myself," he said, "as Lord-Lieutenant of the county. Captain Stubbard, as commander of the nearest post, will come with me and read these orders. Gentlemen, see that your horses are ready, and have all of the Admiral's saddled. Captain Scudamore, you have discharged your trust, and doubtless ridden far and hard. My orders to you are—a bottle of wine, and a sirloin of roast beef at once."

For the sailor was now in very low condition, weary, and worried, and in want of food. Riding express, and changing horses twice, not once had he recruited the inner man, who was therefore quite unfit to wrestle with the power of sudden grief. When he heard of the Admiral's death, he staggered, as if a horse had stumbled under him; and his legs, being stiff from hard sticking to saddle, had as much as they could do to hold him up. Yet he felt that he could not do the right thing now,

he could not go and deal with the expedient victuals, neither might he dare intrude upon the ladies yet; so he went out, to comfort himself by attending to the troubles of his foundered horse, and by shedding unseen among the trees the tears which had gathered in his gentle eyes.

According to the surest law of nature, that broken-down animal had been forgotten, as soon as he was done with. He would have given his four legs—if he could legally dispose of them—for a single draught of sweet, delicious, rapturous, ecstatic water; but his bloodshot eyes sought vainly, and his welted tongue found nothing wet, except the flakes of his own salt foam. Until with the help of the moon, a sparkle, (worth more to his mind than all the diamonds he could draw)—a sparkle of the purest water gleamed into his dim eyes from the distance. Recalling to his mind's eye the grand date of his existence, when he was a colt, and had a meadow to himself, with a sparkling river at the end of it, he set forth in good faith, and, although his legs were weary, “negotiated”—as the sporting writers say—the distance between him and the object of desire. He had not the least idea that this had cost ten guineas, as much as his own good self was worth; for it happened to be the first dahlia seen in that part of the country. That gaudy flower at its first

appearance made such a stir among gardeners, that Mr. Swipes gave the Admiral no peace until he allowed him to order one. And so great was this gardener's pride in his profession, that he would not take an order for a rooted slip, or cutting, from the richest man in the neighbourhood, for less than half a guinea. Therefore Mr. Swipes was attending to the plant, with the diligence of a wet-nurse; and the weather being dry, he had soaked it overhead, even before he did that duty to himself.

A man of no teeth can take his nourishment in soup; and nature inverting her manifold devices—which she would much rather do than be beaten—has provided that a horse can chew his solids into liquids, if there is a drop of juice in their composition, whenever his artificial life has failed to supply him with the bucket. This horse, being very dry, laid his tongue to the water-drops that sparkled on the foliage. He found them delicious, and he longed for more; and very soon his ready mind suggested, that the wet must have come out of the leaves, and there must be more therein. Proceeding on this argument, he found it quite correct, and ten guineas'-worth of dahlia was gone into his stomach, by the time that Captain Scudamore came courteously to look after him.

Blyth, in equal ignorance of his sumptuous

repast, gave him a pat of approval, and was turning his head towards the stable yard, when he saw a white figure gliding swiftly through the trees beyond the belt of shrubbery. Weary and melancholy as he was, and bewildered with the tumult of disasters, his heart bounded hotly, as he perceived that the figure was that of his Dolly—Dolly, the one love of his life, stealing forth, probably to mourn alone the loss of her beloved father. As yet he knew nothing of her share in that sad tale, and therefore felt no anxiety at first about her purpose. He would not intrude upon her grief; he had no right to be her comforter; but still she should have some one to look after her, at that time of night, and with so much excitement and danger in the air. So the poor horse was again abandoned to his own resources; and being well-used to such treatment gazed as wistfully and delicately after the young man Scudamore, as that young man gazed after his lady-love.

To follow a person stealthily, is not conducive to one's self-respect; but something in the lady's walk and gesture impelled the young sailor to follow her. She appeared to be hastening, with some set purpose, and without any heed of circumstance, towards a part of the grounds where no house was, no living creature for company, nor even a bench to rest upon.

There was no footpath in that direction; nor anything to go to, but the inland cliff that screened the Hall from north-eastern winds, and at its foot a dark pool, having no good name in the legends of the neighbourhood. Even Parson Twemlow would not go near it, later than the afternoon milking of the cows; and Captain Zeb would much rather face a whole gale of wind in a twelve-foot boat, than give one glance at its dead calm face, when the moon like a ghost stood over it.

“She is going towards Corpse-walk pit,” thought Scuddy, “a cheerful place at this time of night! She might even fall into it unawares, in her present state of distraction. I am absolutely bound to follow her.”

Duty fell in with his wishes, as it has a knack of doing. Forgetting his weariness he followed, and became more anxious at every step. For the maiden walked as in a dream, without regard of anything, herself more like a vision than a good substantial being. To escape Mrs. Stubbard, she had gone upstairs, and locked herself in her bedroom, and then slipped out without changing dress, but throwing a dark mantle over it. This had fallen off, and she had not cared to stop or think about it, but went on to her death, exactly as she went in to dinner. Her dress of white silk took the moonlight with

a soft gleam like itself, and her clustering curls (released from fashion by the power of passion) fell, like the shadows, on her sweet white neck. But she never even asked herself how she looked; she never turned round to admire her shadow; to-morrow she would throw no shade, but be one; and how she looked, or what she was, would matter, to the world she used to think so much of, never more.

Suddenly she passed from the moonlight into the blackness of a lonely thicket, and forced her way through it, without heed of bruise or rent. At the bottom of the steep, lay the long dark pit; and she stood upon the brink, and gazed into it. To a sane mind nothing could look less inviting. All above was air and light, freedom of the wind, and play of moon with summer foliage; all below was gloom and horror, cold eternal stillness, and oblivion everlasting. Even the new white frock awoke no flutter upon that sullen breast.

Dolly heaved a sigh and shuddered, but she did not hesitate. Her mind was wandering; but her heart was fixed to make atonement, to give its life for the life destroyed, and to lie too deep for shame or sorrow. Suddenly a faint gleam caught her eyes. The sob of self-pity from her fair young breast had brought into view her cherished treasures, bright keepsakes of the

girlish days, when many a lover worshipped her. Taking from her neck the silken braid, she kissed them, and laid them on the bank. "They were all too good for me," she thought; "they shall not perish with me."

Then with one long sigh, she called up all her fleeting courage, and sprang upon a fallen trunk which overhung the water. "There will be no Dan to save me now," she said as she reached the end of it; "poor Dan! He will be sorry for me. This is the way out of it."

Her white satin shoes for a moment shone upon the black bark of the tree, and with one despairing prayer to Heaven, she leaped into the liquid grave.

Dan was afar; but another was near, who loved her even more than Dan. Blyth Scudamore heard the plunge, and rushed to the brink of the pit, and tore his coat off. For a moment he saw nothing but black water heaving silently; then something white appeared, and moved, and a faint cry arose, and a hopeless struggle with engulfing death began.

"Keep still, don't struggle, only spread your arms, and throw your head back as far as you can;" he cried, as he swam with long strokes towards her. But if she heard, she could not heed, as the lights of the deep sky came and went, and the choking water flashed between,

and gurgled into her ears and mouth, and smothered her face with her own long hair. She dashed her poor helpless form about, and flung out her feet for something solid, and grasped in dim agony at the waves herself had made. Then her dress became heavily bagged with water; and the love of life was quenched; and the night of death enveloped her. Without a murmur down she went, and the bubbles of her breath came up.

Scudamore uttered a bitter cry, for his heart was almost broken—within an arm's length of his love, and she was gone for ever! For the moment he did not perceive that the clasp of despair must have drowned them both. Pointing his hands and throwing up his heels, he made one vain dive after her, then he knew that the pit was too deep, for the bottom to be reached in that way. He swam to the trunk, from which Dolly had leaped, and judging the distance by the sullen ripple, dashed in with a dive, like a terrified frog. Like a bullet, he sank to the bottom, and groped, with three fathoms of water above him. Just as his lungs were giving out, he felt something soft, and limp, and round. Grasping this by the trailing hair, he struck mightily up for the surface, and drew a long breath, and sustained above water the head that fell back upon his panting breast.

Some three hours later, Dolly Darling lay in her own little bed, as pale as death, but sleeping the sleep of the world that sees the sun; while her only sister knelt by her side, weeping the tears of a higher world than that. "How could I be so brutal, and so hard?" sobbed Faith; "if father has seen it, will he ever forgive me? His last words were 'forgive and love.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FATAL STEP.

As Carne rode up the hill that night, towards his ruined castle, the flush of fierce excitement and triumphant struggle died away, and self-reproach and miserable doubt struck into him, like ague. For the death of Twemlow—as he supposed—he felt no remorse whatever. Him he had shot in furious combat, and as a last necessity; the fellow had twice insulted him, and then insolently assaulted him. And Faith, who had thwarted him with Dolly, and been from the first his enemy, now would have to weep and wail, and waste her youth in constancy. All that was good; but he could not regard with equal satisfaction the death of the ancient Admiral. The old man had brought it upon himself, by his stupid stubbornness; and looking fairly upon that matter, Carne scarcely saw how to blame himself. Still, it was a most unlucky thing, and must lead to a quantity of mischief. To-morrow, or at the latest, Monday, was to have crowned

with grand success his years of toil and danger. There still might be the landing, and he would sail that night to hasten it, instead of arranging all ashore; but it could no longer be a triumph of crafty management. The country was up; the Admiral's death would spread the alarm and treble it; and, worst of all, in the hot pursuit of himself, which was sure to follow, when people's wits came back to them, all the stores and ammunition, brought together by so much skill and patience and hardihood, must of necessity be discovered, and fall into the hands of the enemy. Farewell to his long-cherished hope of specially neat retribution—to wit, that the ruins of his family should be the ruin of the land which had rejected him! Then a fierce thought crossed his mind, and became at once a stern resolve. If he could never restore Carne Castle, and dwell there in prosperity, neither should any of his oppressors. The only trace of his ancestral home should be a vast black hole in earth.

For even if the landing still succeeded, and the country were subdued, he could never make his home there, after what he had done to-night. Dolly was lost to him for ever; and although he had loved her with all the ardour he could spare from his higher purposes, he must make up his mind to do without her; and perhaps it was all

the better for him. If he had married her, no doubt he could soon have taught her her proper place; but no one could tell how she might fly out, through her self-will and long indulgence. He would marry a French woman, that would be the best; perhaps one connected with the Empress Josephine. As soon as he had made up his mind to this, his conscience ceased to trouble him.

From the crest of the hill at the eastern gate, many a bend of shore was clear, and many a league of summer sea lay wavering in the moonlight. Along the beach, red torches flared, as men of the Coast-Defence pushed forth, and tawny flash of cannon inland signalled for the Volunteers; while the lights gleamed (like windows opened from the depth) where sloop and gunboat, frigate, and ship of the line, were crowding sail to rescue England. For the semaphore, and when day was out, the beacon-lights had sped along the backbone of the English hills, and England called every Englishman to show what he was made of.

“That will do. Enough of that, John Bull!” Defying his native land, Carne shook his fist in the native manner. “Stupid old savage, I shall live to make you howl. This country has become too hot to hold me; and I’ll make it hotter before I have done. Here, Orso, and

Leo, good dogs, good dogs! You could kill a hundred British bull-dogs. Mount guard for an hour, till I call you down the hill. You can pull down a score of Volunteers apiece, if they dare to come after me. I have an hour to spare, and I know how to employ it. Jerry, old Jerry Bowles, stir your crooked shanks. What are you rubbing your bleary eyes at?"

The huge boar-hounds, who obeyed no voice but his, took post upon the rugged road (which had never been repaired since the Carnes were a power in the land), and sat side by side beneath the crumbling arch, with their long fangs glistening, and red eyes rolling in the silver moonlight, while their deep chests panted for the chance of good fresh human victuals. Then Carne gave his horse to ancient Jerry, saying, "Feed him, and take him with his saddle on, to the old yew-tree in half-an-hour. Wait there for Captain Charron, and for me. You are not to go away till I come to you. Who is in the old place now? Think well, before you answer me."

"No one now in the place, but her"—the old man lifted his elbow, as a coachman does in passing—"and him down in the yellow jug. All the French sailors are at sea. Only she won't go away; and she moaneth worse than all the owls and ghosts. Ah, your Honour

should never 'a done 'that—respectable folk to Springhaven too ! ”

“It was a slight error of judgment, Jerry. What a mealy lot these English are, to make such a fuss about a trifle ! But I am too soft-hearted to blow her up. Tell her to meet me in half-an-hour by the broken dial, and to bring the brat, and all her affairs, in a bundle such as she can carry, or kick down the hill before her. In half-an-hour, do you understand ? And if you care for your stiff old bones, get out of the way by that time.”

In that half hour, Carne gathered in small compass, and strapped up in a little “mail”—as such light baggage then was called—all his important documents, despatches, letters, and papers of every kind, and the cash he was entrusted with, which he used to think safer at Springhaven. Then he took from a desk which was fixed to the wall a locket bright with diamonds, and kissed it and fastened it beneath his neck-cloth. The wisp of hair inside it came not from any young or lovely head, but from the resolute brow of his mother, the woman who hated England. He should have put something better to his mouth,—for instance, a good beef sandwich. But one great token of his perversion was that he never did feed well—a sure proof of the unrighteous man, as suggested by the Holy

Psalmist, and more distinctly put by Livy in the character he gives Hannibal.

Regarding as a light thing his poor unfurnished stomach, Carne mounted the broken staircase, in a style which might else have been difficult. He had made up his mind to have one last look at the broad lands of his ancestors, from the last that ever should be seen of the walls they had reared and ruined. He stood upon the highest vantage-point that he could attain with safety, where a shaggy gnarl of the all-pervading ivy served as a friendly stay. To the right and left, and far behind him, all had once been their domain—every tree, and meadow, and rock that faced the moon, had once belonged to his ancestors. “Is it a wonder that I am so fierce?” he cried, with unwonted self-inspection; “who, that has been robbed as I have, would not try to rob in turn? The only thing amazing is my patience, and my justice. But I will come back yet, and have my revenge.”

Descending to his hyena den—as Charron always called it—he caught up his packet, and took a lantern, and a coil of tow which had been prepared; and strode forth for the last time into the sloping court behind the walls. Passing towards the eastern vaults, he saw the form of some one by the broken dial, above the hedge of brambles, which had once been of roses and

sweetbriar. "Oh, that woman, I had forgotten that affair!" he muttered with annoyance, as he pushed through the thorns to meet her.

Polly Cheeseman, the former belle of Springhaven, was leaning against the ruined dial, with a child in her arms, and a bundle at her feet. Her pride and gaiety had left her now; and she looked very wan through frequent weeping, and very thin from nursing. Her beauty (like her friends) had proved unfaithful, under shame and sorrow; and little of it now remained, except the long brown tresses, and the large blue eyes. Those eyes she fixed upon Carne, with more of terror than of love in them: although the fear was such as turns, with a very little kindness, to adoring love.

Carne left her to begin, for he really was not without shame in this matter; and Polly was far better suited than Dolly, for a scornful and arrogant will like his. Deeply despising all the female race—as the Greek tragedian calls them—(save only the one who had given him to the world) he might have been a God to Polly, if he had but behaved as a man to her. She looked at him now with an imploring gaze, from the gentleness of her ill-used heart.

Their child (a fine boy about ten months old) broke the silence, by saying "booh, booh," very well, and holding out little hands to his

father, who had often been scornfully kind to him.

“ Oh, Caryl, Caryl, you will never forsake him ! ” cried the young mother, holding him up with rapture, and supporting his fat arms in that position ; “ he is the very image of you ; and he seems to know it. Baby, say ‘ Da-da ! ’ There he has put his mouth up ! And his memory is so wonderful ! Oh, Caryl, what do you think of that—and the first time of trying it by moonlight ? ”

“ There is no time for this nonsense, Polly. He is a wonderful baby, I dare say ; and so is every baby, till he gets too old. You must obey orders, and be off with him.”

“ Oh, no ! You are come to take us with you. There, I have covered his face up ; that he may not suppose you look cross at me. Oh, Caryl, you would never leave him behind, even if you could do that to me ! We are not grand people ; and you can put us anywhere, and now I am nearly as well as ever. I have put up all his little things ; it does not matter about my own. I was never brought up to be idle ; and I can earn my own living anywhere ; and it might be a real comfort for you, with the great people going against you, to have somebody—not very grand, of course, but as true to you as yourself, and belonging altogether to you. I

know many people, who would give their eyes for such a baby."

"There is no time for this," Carne answered sternly; "my arrangements are made; and I cannot take you. I have no fault to find with you; but argument is useless."

"Yes, I know that, Caryl; and I am sure that I never would attempt to argue with you. You should have everything your own way, and I could attend to so many things, that no man ever does properly. I will be a slave to you, and this little darling love you; and then you will feel that you have two to love you, wherever you go, and whatever you do. And if I spoke crossly when first I found out, that—that I went away for nothing with you—you must have forgiven me by this time; and I never will remind you again of it—if I do, send me back to the place I belong to. I belong to you now, Caryl, and so does he; and when we are away from the people who know me, I shall be pleasant and cheerful again. I was only two-and-twenty, the day the boats came home last week; and they used to say the young men jumped into the water, as soon as they caught sight of me. Try to be kind to me; and I shall be so happy that I shall look almost as I used to do, when you said that the great ladies might be grander, but none of them fit to look into my looking-glass.

Dear Caryl, I am ready ; I don't care where it is ; or what I may have to put up with—so long as you will make room for your Polly, and your darling baby ! ”

“ I am not at all a hard man ; ” said Carne, retreating, as the impulsive Polly offered him the baby ; “ but once for all, no more of this ! I have quite forgiven any strong expressions you may have made use of, when your head was light ; and if all goes well, I shall provide for you and the child, according to your rank in life. But now you must run down the hill ; if you wish to save your life and his.”

“ I have run down the hill already. I care not a pin for my own life ; and hard as you are, you would never have the heart to destroy your own little Caryl. He may be called *Caryl*—you will not deny him that, although he has no right to be called *Carne*. Oh, Caryl, Caryl, you can be so good ; when you think there is something to gain by it ! Only be good to us now ; and God will bless you for it, darling. I have given up all the world for you ; and you cannot have the heart to cast me off.”

“ What a fool the woman is ! Have you ever known me change my mind ? If you scorn your own life, through your own folly, you must care for the brat's. If you stop here ten minutes, you will both be blown to pieces.”

"Through my own folly! Oh, God in heaven, that you should speak so, of my love for you! Squire Carne, you are the worst man that ever lived; and it serves me right for trusting you. But where am I to go? Who will take me, and support me, and my poor abandoned child?"

"Your parents, of course, are your natural supporters. You are hurting your child, by this low abuse of me. Now put aside excitement; and run home, like a sensible woman, before your good father goes to bed."

She had watched his face all the time, as if she could scarcely believe that he was in earnest; but he proved it, by leaving her with a wave of his hat, and hastening back to his lantern. Then taking up that, and the coil of tow, but leaving his package against the wall, he disappeared in the narrow passage leading to the powder vaults. Polly stood still, by the broken dial, with her eyes upon the moon, and her arms around the baby, and a pang in her heart which prevented her from speaking, or moving, or even knowing where she was.

Then Carne, stepping warily, unlocked the heavy oak-door at the entrance of the cellarage, held down his lantern, and fixed with a wedge the top step of the ladder, which had been made to revolve, with a pin and collar at either end,

as above related. After trying the step with his hand, to be sure that it was now wedged safely, he flung his coil into the vault, and followed. Some recollection made him smile, as he was going down the steps: it was that of a stout man lying at the bottom, shaken in every bone, yet sound as a grape ensconced in jelly. As he touched the bottom, he heard a little noise, as of some small substance falling; but seeing a piece of old mortar dislodged, he did not turn round to examine the place. If he had done so, he would have found behind the ladder the wedge he had just inserted, to secure the level of the "Inspector's step."

Unwinding his coil of tow, which had been steeped in saltpetre to make a slow fuse, with a toss of his long legs he crossed the barricade of solid oak rails about six feet high, securely fastened across the vault, for the enclosure of the dangerous storage. Inside it, was a passage (between chests of arms, dismounted cannon, and cases from every department of supply) to the explosive part of the magazine, the devourer of the human race, the pulp of the marrow of the Furies—gunpowder.

Of this there was now collected here, and stored in tiers that reached the roof, enough to blow up half the people of England, or lay them all low with a bullet before it; yet not enough,

not a millionth part enough, to move for the breadth of a hair the barrier betwixt right and wrong ; which a very few barrels are enough to do, with a man who has sapped the foundations. Treading softly, for fear of a spark from his boots, and guarding the lantern well, Carne approached one of the casks in the lower tier, and lifted the tarpaulin. Then he slipped the wooden slide in the groove, and allowed some five or six pounds to run out upon the floor, from which the cask was raised by timber baulks. Leaving the slide partly open, he spread one end of his coil, like a broad lamp-wick, in the pile of powder which had run out ; and put a brick upon the tow to keep it from shifting. Then he paid out the rest of the coil upon the floor like a snake some thirty feet long, with the tail about a yard inside the barricade. With a very steady hand, he took the candle from inside the horn, and kindled the tail of the fuse ; and then replacing his light, he recrossed the open timber-work, and swiftly remounted the ladder of escape. “Twenty minutes, or half an hour’s grace ;” he thought, “and long before that I shall be at the yew-tree.”

But, as he planted his right foot sharply upon the top step of the ladder, that step swung back, and cast him heavily backwards to the bottom. The wedge had dropped out ; and the step revolved, like the treadle of a fox-trap.

For a minute or two, he lay stunned and senseless, with the lantern before him on its side, and the candle burning a hole in the bubbly horn. Slowly recovering his wits, he strove to rise, as the deadly peril burst over him. But instead of rising, he fell back again, with a curse, and then a long-drawn groan ; for pain (like the thrills of a man on the rack) had got hold of him, and meant to keep him. His right arm was snapped at the elbow, and his left leg just above the knee ; and the jar of his spine made him feel as if his core had been split out of him. He had no fat, like Shargeloes, to protect him, and no sheath of hair like Twenlow's.

Writhing with anguish, he heard a sound which did not improve his condition. It was the spluttering of the fuse, eating its merry way towards the five hundred casks of gunpowder. In the fury of despair he contrived to rise, and stood on his right foot, with the other hanging limp, while he stayed himself with his left hand upon the ladder. Even if he could crawl up this, it would benefit him nothing. Before he could drag himself ten yards, the explosion would overtake him. His only chance was to quench the fuse, or draw it away from the priming. With a hobble of agony, he reached the barricade, and strove to lift his crippled frame over it. It was hopeless ; the power of

his back was gone; and his limbs were unable to obey his brain. Then he tried to crawl through at the bottom; but the opening of the rails would not admit his body, and the train of ductile fire had left only ash for him to grasp at.

Quivering with terror, and mad with pain, he returned to the foot of the steps, and clung, till a gasp of breath came back. Then he shouted with all his remaining power—"Polly, oh, Polly, my darling Polly!"

Polly had been standing, like a statue of despair, beside the broken dial. To her it mattered little, whether earth should open and swallow her, or fire cast her up to heaven. But his shout aroused her from this trance; and her heart leaped up, with the fond belief that he had relented, and was calling her and the child, to share his fortunes. There she stood in the archway, and looked down; and the terror of the scene overcame her. Through a broken arch, beyond the barricade, pale moonbeams crossed the darkness, like the bars of some soft melody; in the middle, the serpent coil was hissing with the deadly nitre; at the foot of the steps was her false lover—husband he had called himself—with his hat off, and his white face turned in the last supplication towards her; as hers had been turned towards him just now. Should a woman be as pitiless as a man?

“Come down, for God’s sake; and climb that cursed wood, and pull back the fuse—pull it back from the powder. Oh, Polly, and then we will go away together!”

“It is too late. I will not risk my baby. You have made me so weak, that I could never climb that fence. You are blowing up the castle, which you promised to my baby! But you shall not blow up him. You told me to run away; and run I must. Good-bye! I am going to my natural supporters.”

Carne heard her steps, as she fled; and he fancied that he heard therewith a mocking laugh; but it was a sob, a hysterical sob. She would have helped him, if she dared; but her wits were gone in panic. She knew not of his shattered limbs, and horrible plight; and it flashed across her, that this was another trick of his—to destroy her, and the baby, while he fled. She had proved that all his vows were lies.

Then Carne made his mind up to die, like a man, for he saw that escape was impossible. Limping back to the fatal barrier, he raised himself to his full height; and stood proudly, to see the conclusion of himself. Not a quiver of his haughty features showed the bodily pain that racked him; not a flinch of his deep eyes confessed the tumult moving in his mind and soul. He pulled out his watch, and laid it on the

top rail of the old oak fence ; there was not enough light to read the time, but he could count the ticks he had to live. Suddenly hope flashed through his heart, like the crack of a gun, like a lightning fork—a big rat was biting an elbow of the yarn, where some tallow had fallen upon it. Would he cut, would he drag it away to his hole, would he pull it a little from its fatal end ? He was strong enough to do it, if he only understood— The fizz of saltpetre disturbed the rat ; and he hoisted his tail, and skipped back to his home.

The last thoughts of this unhappy man went back upon his early days ; and things, which he had passed without thinking of, stood before him, like his tombstone. None of his recent crimes came now to his memory, to disturb it—there was time enough after the body for them—but trifles which had first depraved the mind, and slips whose repetition had made slippery the soul,—like the alphabet of death, grew plain to him. Then he thought of his mother, and crossed himself, and said a little prayer to the Virgin.

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Charron was waiting by the old yew-tree, and Jerry sat trembling, with his eyes upon the castle ; while the black horse (roped to a branch) was mourning the scarcity of oats and the abundance of gnats.

“Pest, and the devil, but the coast is all alive!” cried the Frenchman, soothing anxiety with solid, and liquid comforts. “Something has gone wrong, behind the tail of everything. And there goes that big Stoo-bar, blazing with his sordid battery ! Arouse thee, old Cheray ! The time too late is over. Those lights, thrice accursed, will display our little boat ; and John Bull is rushing with a thousand sails. The Commander is mad. They will have him, and us too. Shall I dance by a rope ? It is the only dancing verisemble for me in England.”

“I have never expected any good to come ;” the old man answered, without moving. “The curse of the house is upon the young squire. I saw it in his eyes this morning ; the same as I saw in his father’s eyes, when the sun was going down, the very night he died. I shall never see him more, sir ; nor you either ; nor any other man that bides to the right side of his coffin.”

“Bah ! what a set you are of funerals, you Englishmen ! But if I thought he was in risk, I would stay to see the end of it.”

“Here comes the end of it !” The old man cried, leaping up and catching at a rugged cord of trunk, with his other hand pointing up the hill.

From the base of the castle a broad blaze rushed, showing window and battlement, arch and tower, as in a flicker of the Northern lights.

Then up went all the length of fabric, as a wanton child tosses his Noah's ark. Keep and buttress, tower and arch, mullioned window and battlement, in a fiery furnace leaped on high, like the outburst of a volcano. Then, with a roar that rocked the earth, they flew into a million shatters, spreading the heavens with a rush of fire, and the sea with a cataract of blood. Following slowly in stately spires, and calmly swallowing everything, a fountain of dun smoke arose ; and solemn silence filled the night.

"All over now, thank the angels and the saints ! My faith, but I made up my mind to join them ;" cried Charron, who had fallen, or been felled by the concussion. "Cheray, art thou still alive ? The smoke is in my neck. I cannot liberate my words ; but the lumps must be all come down by this time, without adding to the weight of our poor brains. Something fell in this old tree, a long way up, as high as where the crows build. It was like a long body, with one leg and one arm. I hope it was not the Commander ; but one thing is certain—he is gone to heaven. Let us pray that he may stop there ; if St. Peter admits a man who was selling the keys of his Country to the enemy. But we must do duty to ourselves, my Cheray. Let us hasten to the sea, and give the signal for

the boat. *La Torche* will be a weak light after this."

"I will not go. I will abide my time." The old man staggered to a broken column of the ancient gateway, which had fallen near them, and flung his arms around it. "I remember this, since I first could toddle. The ways of the Lord are wonderful."

"Come away, you old fool!" cried the Frenchman; "I hear the tramp of soldiers in the valley. If they catch you here, it will be drum-head work, and you will swing before morning in the ruins."

"I am very old. My time is short. I would liefer hang from an English beam, than set foot again in any of them foreign haythen rookeries."

"Farewell to thee, then! Thou art a faithful clod. Here are five guineas for thee, of English stamp. I doubt if Napoleons shall ever be coined in England."

He was off while he might—a gallant Frenchman, and an honest enemy; such as our country has respected always, and often endeavoured to turn into fast friends. But the old man stood and watched the long gap, where for centuries the castle of the Carnes had towered. And his sturdy faith was rewarded.

"I am starving"—these words came feebly from a gaunt ragged figure, approaching him.

“For three days my food has been forgotten; and bad as it was, I missed it. There came a great rumble; and my walls fell down. Ancient Jerry, I can go no further. I am empty as a shank-bone, when the marrow-toast is serving. Your duty was to feed me—with inferior stuff at any rate.”

“No, sir, no;” the old servitor was roused by the charge of neglected duty. “Sir Parsley, it was no fault of mine whatever. Squire undertook to see to all of it himself. Don’t blame me, sir; don’t blame me.”

“Never mind the blame, but make it good;” Mr. Shargeloes answered meagrely; for he felt as if he never could be fat again. “What do I see there? It is like a crust of bread; but I am too weak to stoop for it.”

“Come inside the tree, sir.” The old man led him, as a grandsire leads a famished child. “What a shame to starve you, and you so hearty! But the Squire clean forgotten it, I doubt, with his foreign tricks coming to this great blow-up. Here sir, here, please to sit down a moment, while I light a candle. They French chaps are so wasteful always, and always grumbling at good English victual. Here’s enough to feed a family, Captain Charron has throwed by—bread, and good mutton, and pretty near half a ham, and a bottle, or so, of thin nasty

foreign wine. Eat away, Sir Parsley ; why, it does me good to see you ! You feeds something like an Englishman. But, you know, sir, it were all your own fault at bottom, for coming among them foreigners ameddling.”

“ You are a fine fellow. You shall be my head butler.” Percival Shargeloes replied ; while he made such a meal as he never made before, and never should make again ; even when he came to be the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor of London.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WRATH AND SORROW.

THE two most conspicuous men of the age were saddened and cast down just now—one by the natural kindly sorrow, into which all men live for others, till others live into it for them; and one by the petulant turns of fortune, twisting and breaking his best woven web. Lord Nelson arrived at Springhaven on Monday, to show his affection for his dear old friend; and the Emperor Napoleon, at the same time, was pacing the opposite cliffs, in grief and dudgeon.

He had taken his post on some high white land, about a league southward of Boulogne, and with strong field-glasses, which he pettishly exchanged in doubt of their power and truth, he was scanning all the roadways of the shore, and the trackless breadths of sea. His quick brain was burning for despatches over land—whether from the coast-road past Etaples, or further inland by the great route from Paris, or away

to the south-east by special courier from the Austrian frontier—as well as for signals out at sea, and the movements of the British ships, to show that his own were coming. He had treated with disdain the suggestions of his faithful Admiral Decrès who had feared to put the truth too plainly,—that the fleet ordered up from the west had failed, and with it the Master's mighty scheme. Having yet to learn the lesson that his best plans might be foiled, he was furious when doubt was cast upon this pet design. Like a giant of a spider at the nucleus of his web, he watched the broad fan of radiant threads, and the hovering of filmy woof; but without the mild philosophy of that spider, who is versed in the very sad capriciousness of flies.

Just within hearing (and fain to be further, in his present state of mind) were several young officers of the staff, making little mouths at one another, for want of better pastime, but looking as grave when the mighty man glanced round, as schoolboys do under the master's eye. "Send Admiral Decrès to me;" the Emperor shouted, as he laid down his telescope, and returned to his petulant to-and-fro.

In a few minutes Admiral Decrès arrived, and after a salute which was not acknowledged, walked in silence at his master's side. The great man, talking to himself aloud, and reviling almost

every one except himself, took no more notice of his comrade for some minutes, than if he had been a poodle keeping pace with him. Then he turned upon him fiercely, with one hand thrown out, as if he would have liked to strike him.

“What then is the meaning of all this?” He spoke too fast for the other to catch all his words. “You have lost me three days of it. How much longer will you conceal your knowledge? Carne’s scheme has failed, through treachery—probably his own. I never liked the man. He wanted to be the master of me—of me! I can do without him; it is all the better, if my fleet will come. I have three fleets, besides these. Any one of them would do. They would do, even if they were manned by corpses; so long as they disturbed the enemy. You know where Villeneuve is—but you will not tell me.”

“I told your Majesty what I thought,” M. Decrès replied with dignity, “but it did not please you to listen to me. Shall I now tell your Majesty what I know?”

“Ha! You have dared to have secret despatches! You know more of the movements of my fleets than I do! You have been screening him all along. Which of you is the worse traitor?”

“Your Majesty will regret these words.

Villeneuve, and myself, are devoted to you. I have not heard from him. I have received no despatches. But in a private letter just received, which is here at your Majesty's service, I find these words, which your Majesty can see. 'From my brother on the Spanish coast I have just heard. Admiral Villeneuve has sailed for Cadiz, believing Nelson to be in chase of him. My brother saw the whole fleet crowding sail southward. No doubt it is the best thing they could do. If they came across Nelson, they would be knocked to pieces.' Your Majesty, that is an opinion only; but it seems to be shared by M. Villeneuve."

Napoleon's wrath was never speechless—except upon one great occasion—and its outburst put every other in the wrong, even while he knew that he was in the right. Regarding Decrès with a glare of fury, such as no other eyes could pour, or meet—a glare as of burnished steel fired from a cannon—he drove him out of every self-defence or shelter, and shattered him in the dust of his own principles. It was not the difference of rank between them, but the difference in the power of their minds, that chased like a straw before the wind the very stable senses of the man who understood things. He knew that he was right; but the right was routed; and away with it flew all capacity of

reason in the pitiless torrent of passion ; like a man in a barrel, and the barrel in Niagara.

M. Decrès knew not head from tail, in the rush of invective poured upon him ; but he took off his hat, in soft search for his head, and to let in the compliments rained upon it.

“ It is good ; ” replied the Emperor, replying to himself, as the foam of his fury began to pass ; “ you will understand, Decrès, that I am not angry, but only lament that I have such a set of fools. You are not the worst. I have bigger fools than you. Alas that I should confess it ! ”

Admiral Decrès put his hat upon his head, for the purpose of taking it off, to acknowledge the kindness of this compliment. It was the first polite expression he had received for half an hour. And it would have been the last, if he had dared to answer.

“ Villeneuve cannot help it that he is a fool,” continued Napoleon in a milder strain ; “ but he owes it to his rank, that he should not be a coward. Nelson is his black beast. Nelson has reduced him to a condition of wet pulp. I shall send a braver man to supersede him. Are French fleets for ever to turn tail to an inferior force of stupid English ? If I were on the seas, I would sweep Nelson from them. Our men are far braver, when they learn to spread their legs. As soon as I have finished with those filthy

Germans, I will take the command of the fleets myself. It will be a bad day for that bragging Nelson. Give me pen and paper, and send Daru to me. I must conquer the Continent, once more, I suppose; and then I will return, and deal with England."

In a couple of hours, he had shaped and finished the plan of a campaign, the most triumphant that even he ever planned and accomplished. Then his mind became satisfied with good work, and he mounted his horse, and for the last time rode through the grandest encampment the sun has ever seen, distributing his calm sweet smile, as if his nature were too large for tempests.

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On the sacred white coast (which the greatest of Frenchmen should only approach as a prisoner) stood a man of less imperious mould, and of sweet and gentle presence. A man who was able to command himself, in the keenest disappointment, because he combined a quick sense of humour with the power of prompt action, and was able to appreciate his own great qualities, without concluding that there were no other. His face, at all times except those of hot battle, was filled with quiet sadness; as if he were sent into the world for some great purpose beyond his knowledge, yet surely not above his aim.

Years of deep anxiety, and ever urgent duty, had made him look old before his time, but in no wise abated his natural force. He knew that he had duty before him still; and he felt that the only discharge was death.

But now, in the tenderness of his heart, he had forgotten all about himself, and even for the moment about his country. Nelson had taken the last fond look at the dear old friend of many changeful years, so true and so pleasant throughout every change. Though one eye had failed for the work of the brain, it still was in sympathy with his heart; and a tear shone upon either wrinkled cheek, as the uses of sadness outlast the brighter view.

He held Faith by the hand, or she held by his, as they came forth, without knowing it; through Nature's demand for an open space, when the air is choked with sorrow.

"My dear, you must check it; you must leave off," said Nelson, although he was going on himself. "It is useless for me to say a word to you; because I am almost as bad myself. But still I am older, and I feel that I ought to be able to comfort you, if I only knew the way."

"You do comfort me, more than I can tell, although you don't say anything. For any one to sit here, and be sorry with me, makes it come a little lighter. And when it is a man like you,

Lord Nelson, I feel a sort of love that makes me feel less bitter. Mr. Twemlow drove me wild, with a quantity of texts, and a great amount of talk about a better land. How would he like to go to it himself, I wonder? There is a great hole in my heart; and nothing that anybody says can fill it."

"And nothing that any one can do, my dear," her father's friend answered softly, "unless it is your own good self, with the kindness of the Lord to help you. One of the best things to begin with, is to help somebody else, if you can, and lead yourself away into another person's troubles. Is there any one here very miserable?"

"None that I can think of half so miserable as I am. There is great excitement, but no misery. Miss Twemlow has recovered her Lord Mayor—the gentleman that wore that extraordinary coat—oh, I forgot, you were not here then! And although he has had a very sad time of it, every one says that the total want of diet will be much better for him than any mere change. I am ashamed to be talking of such trifles now; but I respect that man, he was so straight-forward. If my brother Frank had been at all like him, we should never have been as we are this day."

"My dear, you must not blame poor Frank. He would not come down to the dinner, because

he hated warlike speeches. But he has seen the error of his ways. No more treasonable stuff for him. He thought it was large, and poetic, and all that; like giving one's shirt to an impostor. All of us make mistakes sometimes. I have made a great many myself, and have always been the foremost to perceive them. But your own brave lover—have you forgotten him? He fought like a hero, I am told, and nothing could save his life, except that he wore a new-fashioned periwig."

"I would rather not talk of him now, Lord Nelson; although he had no periwig. I am deeply thankful that he escaped; and no doubt did his best, as he was bound to do. I try to be fair to everybody: but I cannot help blaming every one, when I come to remember how blind we have been. Captain Stubbard must have been so blind; and Mrs. Stubbard a great deal worse; and worst of all his own aunt, Mrs. Twemlow. Oh, Lord Nelson, if you had only stopped here, instead of hurrying away for more glory! You saw the whole of it, you predicted everything, you even warned us again in your last letter! And yet you must go away, and leave us to ourselves; and this is how the whole of it has ended."

"My dear child, I will not deny that the eye of Nelson has a special gift for piercing the wiles

of the scoundrelly foe. But I was under orders, and must go. The nation believed that it could not do without me; although there are other men every bit as good, and in their own opinion superior. But the enemy has never been of that opinion; and a great deal depends upon what they think. And the rule has been always to send me, where there are many kicks but few coppers. I have never been known to repine. We all err; but if we do our duty as your dear father did his, the Lord will forgive us, when our enemies escape. When my time comes, as it must do soon, there will be plenty to carp at me; but I shall not care, if I have done my best. Your father did his best, and is happy."

Faith Darling took his hand again; and her tears were for him, quite as much as for herself. "Give me one of the buttons of your coat," she said; "here is one that cannot last till you get home."

It was hanging by a thread, and yet the hero was very loth to part with it; though if it had parted with him, the chances were ten to one against his missing it. However, he conquered himself; but not so entirely as to let her cut it off. If it must go, it should be by his own hand. He pulled out a knife, and cut it off; and she kissed it, when he gave it to her.

“I should like to do more than that;” he said, though he would sooner have parted with many guineas; “is there nobody here, that I can help, from my long good-will to Springhaven?”

“Oh, yes! How stupid I am!” cried Faith. “I forgot everybody in my own trouble. There is a poor young man with a broken heart, who came to me this morning. He has done no harm that I know of; but he fell into the power of that wicked—but I will use no harsh words, because he is gone most dreadfully to his last account. This poor youth said he only cared to die, after all the things that had happened here, for he has always been fond of my father. At first I refused to see him; but they told me such things that I could not help it. He is the son of our chief man here, and you said what a fine British seaman he would make.”

“I remember two or three of that description, especially young Dan Tugwell.” Nelson had an amazing memory of all who had served under him, or even had wished to do so. “I see by your eyes, that it is young Tugwell. If it will be any pleasure to you, I will see him, and do what I can for him. What has he done, my dear, and what can I do for him?”

“He has fallen into black disgrace; and his only desire is to redeem it, by dying for his country. His own father has refused to see

him, although he was mainly the cause of it; and his mother, who was Erle Twemlow's nurse, is almost out of her mind with grief. A braver young man never lived, and he was once the pride of Springhaven. He saved poor Dolly from drowning, when she was very young, and the boat upset. His father chastised him cruelly for falling under bad influence. Then he ran away from the village, and seems to have been in French employment. But he was kept in the dark, and had no idea that he was acting against his own country."

"He has been a traitor." Said Lord Nelson sternly. "I cannot help such a man, even for your sake."

"He has not been a traitor, but betrayed," cried Faith; "he believed that his only employment was to convey private letters for the poor French prisoners, of whom we have so many hundreds. I will not contend that he was right in that; but still it was no very great offence. Even you must have often longed to send letters to those you loved in England; and you know how hard it is in war-time. But what they really wanted him for, was to serve as their pilot upon this coast. And the moment he discovered that, though they offered him bags of gold to do it, he faced his death like an Englishman. They attempted to keep him in a stupid state

with drugs, so that he might work like a mere machine. But he found out that, and would eat nothing but hard biscuit. They had him in one of their shallow-boats, or *prâmes*, as they call them, which was to lead them in upon signal from the arch-traitor. This was on Saturday, Saturday night—that dreadful time when we were all so gay. They held a pair of pistols at poor Dan’s head, or at least a man was holding one to each of his ears; and they corded his arms, because he ventured to remonstrate. That was before they had even started, so you may suppose what they would have done to us. Poor Daniel made up his mind to die; and it would have eased his mind, he says now, if he had done so. But while they were waiting for the signal, which through dear father’s vigilance they never did receive, Dan managed to free both his hands in the dark; and as soon as he saw the men getting sleepy, he knocked them both down, and jumped overboard; for he can swim like a fish, or even better. He had very little hopes of escaping, as he says, and the French fired fifty shots after him. With great presence of mind, he gave a dreadful scream, as if he was shot through the head at least, then he flung up his legs, as if he was gone down; but he swam under water for perhaps a hundred yards, and luckily the moon went behind a black

cloud. Then he came to a boat, which had broken adrift, and although he did not dare to climb into her, he held on by her, on the further side from them. She was drifting away with the tide; and at last he ventured to get on board of her, and found a pair of oars, and was picked up at daylight, by a smuggling boat running for Newhaven. He was landed last night, and he heard the dreadful news, and having plenty of money, he hired a post-chaise, and never stopped until he reach Springhaven. He looks worn out now; but if his mind was easier, he would soon be as strong as ever."

"It is a strange story, my dear," said Nelson; "but I see that it has done you good to tell it; and I have known many still stranger. But how could he have money, after such a hard escape?"

"That shows as much as anything how brave he is. He had made up his mind, that if he succeeded in knocking down both those sentinels, he would have the bag of gold, which was put for his reward, in case of his steering them successfully. And before he jumped overboard, he snatched it up; and it helped him to dive, and to swim under water. He put it in his flannel shirt by way of ballast, and he sticks to it, up to the present moment."

"My dear," replied Lord Nelson, much

impressed, "such a man deserves to be in my own crew. If he can show me that bag, and stand questions, I will send him to Portsmouth at my own expense, with a letter to my dear friend, Captain Hardy."

CHAPTER XIX.

TRAFALGAR.

LORD NELSON sailed from Portsmouth, on the 15th of September, in his favourite ship, the *Victory*, to take his last command. He knew that he never should come home, except as a corpse for burial, but he fastened his mind on the work before him, and neglected nothing. "A fair fight, and no favour," was the only thing he longed for.

And this he did obtain at last. The French Commander-in-chief came forth, with all his mighty armament; not of his own desire, but goaded by imperious sneers, and stings that made his manhood tingle. He spread the sea-power of two nations in a stately crescent, double-lined, (as the moon is doubled when beheld through fine plate-glass)—a noble sight, a paramount temptation for the British tow-rope.

"What a lot for we to take to Spithead!" was the British tar's remark; as forty ships of the line and frigates showed their glossy sides,

and canvas bosomed with the gentle air, and veined with gliding sunlight. A grander spectacle never was of laborious man's creation; and the work of the Lord combined to show it to the best advantage—dark headlands in the distance standing as a massive back-ground, long pellucid billows rolling, green as emeralds, from the west, and heaving (as they passed the war-ships) bulk Titanic, and lace-like maze; sweet air wandering from heaven, early sun come fresh from dew; all the good will of the world inspiring men to merriness.

Nelson was not fierce of nature, but as gentle as a lamb. His great desire, as he always proved, was never to destroy his enemies, by the number of one man spareable. He had always been led by the force of education (confirmed by that of experience) to know that the duty of an Englishman is to lessen the stock of Frenchmen; yet he never was free from regret, when compelled to act up to his conscience, upon a larger scale than usual.

It is an old saying, that nature has provided for every disease its remedy, and challenges men to find it out, which they are clever enough not to do. For that deadly disease, Napoleon, the remedy was Nelson; and as soon as he should be consumed, another would appear in Wellington. Such is the fortune of Britannia; because

she never boasts, but grumbles always. The boaster soon exhausts his subject; the grumbler has matter that lasts for ever.

Nelson had much of this national virtue. "Half of them will get away," he said to Captain Blackwood of the *Euryalus*, who was come for his latest orders, "because of that skulking port to leeward. If the wind had held as it was last night, we should have had every one of them. It does seem hard, after waiting so long. And the sky looks like a gale of wind. It will blow to-night; though I shall not hear it. A gale of wind, with disabled ships, means terrible destruction. Do all you can, to save those poor fellows. When they are beaten, we must consider their lives even more than our own, you know; because we have been the cause of it. You know my wishes, as well as I do. Remember this one especially."

"Good-bye, my lord, till the fight is over;" Captain Blackwood loved his chief, with even more than the warm affection felt by all the fleet for him. "When we have got them, I shall come back, and find you safe and glorious."

"God bless you, Blackwood!" Lord Nelson answered, looking at him with a cheerful smile. "But you will never see me alive again."

The hero of a hundred fights, who knew that this would be his last, put on his favourite

ancient coat, threadbare through many a conflict with hard time, and harder enemies. Its beauty, like his own, had suffered in the cause of duty; the gold embroidery had taken leave of absence in some places, and in others showed more fray of silk than gleam of yellow glory; and the four stars fastened on the left breast wanted a little plate-powder sadly. But Nelson was quite contented with them; and like a child—for he always kept in his heart the childhood's freshness—he gazed at the star he was proudest of, the Star of the Bath, and through a fond smile sighed. Through the rays of that star, his death was coming, ere a quarter of a day should be added to his life.

With less pretension, and air of greatness, than the captain of a penny-steamer now displays, Nelson went from deck to deck, and visited every man at quarters, as if the battle hung on every one. There was scarcely a man whom he did not know, as well as a farmer knows his winter hands; and loud cheers rang from gun to gun, when his order had been answered. His order was—"Reserve your fire, until you are sure of every shot." Then he took his stand upon the quarter-deck, assured of victory, and assured that his last bequest to the British nation would be honoured sacredly—about which the less we say, the better.

In this great battle, which crushed the naval power of France, and saved our land from further threat of inroad, Blyth Scudamore was not engaged, being still attached to the Channel fleet; but young Dan Tugwell bore a share—and no small share, by his own account and that of his native village, which received him proudly when he came home. Placed at a gun on the upper deck, on the starboard side near the mizzen-mast, he fought like a Briton, though dazed at first by the roar, and the smoke, and the crash of timber. Lord Nelson had noticed him more than once, as one of the smartest of his crew, and had said to him that very morning—"For the honour of Springhaven, Dan, behave well in your first action." And the youth had never forgotten those words, when the sulphurous fog enveloped him, and the rush of death lifted his curly hair, and his feet were sodden, and his stockings hot, with the blood of shattered messmates.

In the wildest of the wild pell-mell, as the *Victory* lay, like a pelted log, rolling to the storm of shot, with three ships at close quarters hurling all their metal at her, and a fourth alongside clutched so close that muzzle was tompion for muzzle, while the cannon-balls so thickly flew, that many sailors with good eyes saw them meet in the air, and shatter one another,—an order was issued for the starboard guns on the upper deck

to cease firing. An eager-minded Frenchman, adapting his desires as a spring-board to his conclusions, was actually able to believe that Nelson's own ship had surrendered! He must have been off his head; and his inductive process was soon amended by the logic of facts; for his head was off him. The reason for silencing those guns was good—they were likely to do more damage to an English ship which lay beyond, than to the foe at the port-holes. The men who had served those guns were ordered below, to take the place of men who never should fire a gun again. Dan Tugwell, as he turned to obey the order, cast a glance at the Admiral; who gave him a little nod, meaning—"Well done, Dan!"

Lord Nelson had just made a little joke, such as he often indulged in, not from any carelessness about the scene around him—which was truly awful—but simply to keep up his spirits, and those of his brave and beloved companion. Captain Hardy, a tall and portly man, clad in bright uniform, and advancing with a martial stride, cast into shade the mighty hero quietly walking at his left side. And Nelson was covered with dust, from the quarter-gallery of a pounded ship, which he had not stopped to brush away.

"Thank God!" thought Dan; "if those

fellows in the tops, who are picking us off so, shoot at either of them, they will be sure to hit the big man first."

In the very instant of his thought, he saw Lord Nelson give a sudden start, and then reel, and fall upon both knees, striving for a moment to support himself, with his one hand on the deck. Then his hand gave way, and he fell on his left side; while Hardy, who was just before him, turned at the cabin ladder-way, and stooped with a loud cry over him. Dan ran up, and placed his bare arms under the wounded shoulder, and helped to raise, and set him on his staggering legs.

"I hope you are not much hurt, my lord;" said the Captain, doing his best to smile. "They have done for me, at last;" the hero gasped. "Hardy, my back-bone is shot through."

Through the roar of battle, sobs of dear love sounded along the blood-stained deck, as Dan and another seaman took the pride of our nation tenderly, and carried him down to the orlop deck. Yet even so, in the deadly pang, and draining of the life-blood, the sense of duty never failed, and the love of country conquered death. With his feeble hand, he contrived to reach the handkerchief in his pocket, and spread it over his face and breast, lest the crew should be dis-heartened.

“I know who fired that shot;” cried Dan, when he saw that he could help no more. “He never shall live to boast of it; if I have to board the French ship to fetch him.”

He ran back quickly to the quarter-deck; and there found three or four others, eager to give their lives for Nelson’s death. The mizzen-top of the *Redoubtable*, whence the fatal shot had come, was scarcely so much as fifty feet from the starboard rail of the *Victory*. The men who were stationed in that top, although they had no brass cohorn there (such as those in the main and fore tops plied), had taken many English lives, while the thick smoke surged around them.

For some time they had worked unheeded, in the louder roar of cannon; and when at last they were observed, it was hard to get a fair shot at them; not only from the rolling of the entangled ships, and clouds of blinding vapour, but because they retired out of sight to load, and only came forward to catch their aim. However, by the exertions of our marines—who should have been at them long ago—these sharpshooters from the coigne of vantage were now reduced to three brave fellows. They had only done their duty, and perhaps had no idea how completely they had done it; but naturally enough our men looked at them as if they were “too bad for hanging.” Smoky as the air was,

the three men saw that a very strong feeling was aroused against them, and that none of their own side was at hand to back them up. And the language of the English—though they could not understand it—was clearly that of bitter condemnation.

The least resolute of them became depressed by this; being doubtless a Radical, who had been taught that *Vox populi* is *Vox Dei*. He endeavoured therefore to slide down the rigging; but was shot through the heart, and dead, before he had time to know it. At the very same moment, the most desperate villain of the three—as we should call him—or the most heroic of these patriots (as the French historians describe him) popped forward, and shot a worthy Englishman, who was shaking his fist, instead of pointing his gun.

Then an old Quarter-master, who was standing on the poop, with his legs spread out, as comfortably as if he had his Sunday dinner on the spit before him, shouted—"That's him, boys—that glazed hat beggar! Have at him all together, next time he comes forrard." As he spoke, he fell dead, with his teeth in his throat, from the fire of the other Frenchman. But the carbine dropped from the man who had fired, and his body fell dead as the one he had destroyed; for a sharp little Middy, behind

the Quarter-master, sent a bullet through the head, as the hand drew trigger. The slayer of Nelson remained alone ; and he kept back warily, where none could see him.

“All of you fire ; quick, one after other !” cried Dan, who had picked up a loaded musket, and was kneeling in the embrasure of a gun ; “fire, so that he may tell the shots ; that will fetch him out again. Sing out first—‘There he is !’ as if you saw him.”

The men on the quarter-deck, and poop, did so ; and the Frenchman (who was watching through a hole) came forward, for a safe shot while they were loading. He pointed the long gun, which had killed Nelson, at the smart young officer on the poop ; but the muzzle flew up, ere he pulled the trigger ; and leaning forward he fell dead, with his legs and arms spread, like a jack for oiling axles. Dan had gone through some small-arm drill, in the fortnight he spent at Portsmouth, and his eyes were too keen for the bullseye. With a rest for his muzzle he laid it truly for the spot where the Frenchman would re-appear ; with extreme punctuality, he shot him in the throat ; and the gallant man, who deprived the world of Nelson, was thus despatched to a better one, three hours in front of his victim.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST BULLETIN.

To Britannia this was but feeble comfort, even if she heard of it. She had lost her pet hero, the simplest and dearest of all the thousands she has borne and nursed; and for every penny she had grudged him in the flesh, she would lay a thousand pounds upon his bones. To put it more poetically, her smiles were turned to tears—which cost her something—and the laurel drooped in the cypress shade. The hostile fleet was destroyed; brave France would never more come out of harbour, to contend with England; the foggy fear of invasion was like a morning fog dispersed; and yet the funds (the pulse of England) fell at the loss of that one defender.

It was a gloomy evening, and come time for good people to be indoors, when the big news reached Springhaven. Since the Admiral slept in the green churchyard, with no despatch to receive or send, the importance of Springhaven had declined, in all opinion except its own; and

even Captain Stubbard could not keep it up. When the Squire was shot, and Master Erle as well, and Carne-Castle went higher than a lark could soar, and folks were fools enough to believe that Boney would dare to put his foot down there—John Prater had done a most wonderful trade; and never a man, who could lay his tongue justly with the pens that came spluttering from London, had any call for a fortnight together to go to bed sober at his own expense. But this bright season ended, quite as suddenly as it had begun; and when these great “bungers”—as those veterans were entitled, who dealt most freely with the marvellous—had laid their heads together, to produce and confirm another guinea’s worth of fiction, the London press would have none of it. Public interest had rushed into another channel; and the men who had thriven for a fortnight on their tongues, were driven to employ them on their hands again.

But now, on the sixth of November, a new excitement was in store for them. The calm obscurity of night flowed in, through the trees that belonged to Sir Francis now, and along his misty meadows; and the only sound in the village-lane was the murmur of the brook beside it, or the gentle sigh of the retiring sea. Boys of age enough to make much noise, or at least

to prolong it after nightfall, were away in the fishing boats, receiving whacks almost as often as they needed them; for those times (unlike these) were equal to their fundamental duties. In the winding lane, outside the grounds of the Hall, and shaping its convenience naturally by that of the more urgent brook, a man—to show what the times were come to—had lately set up a shoeing forge. He had done it, on the strength of the troopers' horses coming down the hill so fast, and often with their cogs worn out; yet going as hard as if they had no knees, or at least none belonging to their riders. And although he was not a Springhaven man, he had been allowed to marry a Springhaven woman—one of the Capers up the hill; and John Prater (who was akin to him by marriage, and perhaps had an eye to the inevitable ailment of a man whose horse is ailing) backed up his daring scheme so strongly, that the Admiral (anxious for the public good) had allowed this smithy to be set up here.

John Keatch was the man who established this, of the very same family (still thriving in West Middlesex) which for the service of the State supplied an official, whose mantle it is now found hard to fill; and the blacksmith was known as "Jack Ketch" in the village, while his forge was becoming the centre of news. Captain Stubbard employed him for battery

uses, and finding his swing-shutters larger than those of Widow Shanks, and more cheaply lit up by the glow of the forge, was now beginning, in spite of her remonstrance, to post all his very big proclamations there.

"Rouse up your fire, Ketch," he said that evening, as he stood at the door of the smithy, with half-a-dozen of his children at his heels; "bring a dozen clout-nails; here's a tremendous piece of news!"

The blacksmith made a blaze with a few strokes of his bellows, and swung his shutter forward, so that all might read.

"GREAT AND GLORIOUS VICTORY. Twenty line-of-battle ships destroyed or captured. Lord Nelson shot dead. God save the King."

"Keep your fire up. I'll pay a shilling for the coal;" cried the Captain, in the flush of excitement. "Bring out your cow's horn, and go and blow it at the corner. And that drum you had to mend, my boy and girl will beat it. Jack, run up to the battery, and tell them to blaze away for their very lives."

In less than five minutes all the village was there, with the readers put foremost, all reading together at the top of their voices, for the benefit of the rest. Behind them stood Polly Cheeseman peeping, with the glare of the fire

on her sad pale face, and the ruddy cheeks of her infant. "Make way for Widow Carne, and the young Squire Carne," the loud voice of Captain Zeb commanded; "any man as stands afront of her will have me upon him. Now, Ma'am, stand forth; and let them look at you."

This was a sudden thought of Captain Tugwell's; but it fixed her rank among them, as the order of the King might. The strong sense of justice, always ready in Springhaven, backed up her right to be what she had believed herself, and would have been, but for foul deceit and falsehood. And if the proud spirit of Carne ever wandered around the ancestral property, it would have received in the next generation a righteous shock, at desecrating in large letters, well picked out with shade,—“Caryl Carne, Grocer and Buttermen, Cheesemonger, Dealer in bacon, and sausages. Licensed to sell tea, coffee, snuff, pepper, and tobacco.”

For Cheeseman raised his head again, with the spirit of a true British tradesman, as soon as the nightmare of traitorous plots, and contraband imports, was over. Captain Tugwell, on his behalf, led the fishing fleet against that renegade *La Liberté*; and casting the foreigners overboard, they restored her integrity as the *London Trader*. Mr. Cheeseman shed a tear, and put on a new apron, and entirely reformed

his political views, which had been loose and Whiggish. Uprightness of the most sensitive order—that which has slipped and strained its tendons—stamped all his dealings, even in the butter line; and facts having furnished a creditable motive for his rash reliance upon his own cord, he returned amid applause to the pleasant pastimes of a snug churchwarden. And when he was wafted to a still sublimer sphere, his grandson carried on the business well.

Having spread the great news in this striking manner, Captain Stubbard—though growing very bulky now with good living, ever since his pay was doubled—set off at a conscientious pace against the stomach of the hill; lest haply the Hall should feel aggrieved at hearing all this noise, and having to wonder what the reason was. He knew, and was grateful at knowing, that Carne's black crime, and devilish plot, had wrought an entire revulsion in the candid, but naturally too soft, mind of the author of the *Harmodiad*. Sir Francis was still of a liberal mind, and still admired his own works. But forgetting that nobody read them, he feared the extensive harm they might produce, although he was now resolved to write even better in the opposite direction. On the impulse of literary conscience, he held a council with the gardener Swipes, as to the best composition of bonfire

for the consumption of poetry. Mr. Swipes recommended dead pea-haulm, with the sticks left in it, to ensure a draught. Then the poet, in the garden with a long bean-stick, administered fire to the whole edition, not only of the *Harmodiad*, but also of the *Theiodemos*, his later and even grander work. Persons incapable of lofty thought attributed this—the most sage and practical of all forms of palinode—to no higher source than the pretty face and figure, and sweet patriotism of Lady Alice, the youngest sister of Lord Dashville. And subsequent facts, to some extent, confirmed this interpretation.

The old house looked gloomy, and dull of brow, with only three windows showing light, as stout Captain Stubbard (with his short sword swinging from the bulky position where his waist had been) strode along the winding of the hill towards the door. At a sharp corner under some trees, he came almost shoulder to shoulder with a tall man, striking into the road from a footpath. The Captain drew his sword; for his nerves had been flurried, ever since the great explosion which laid him on his back among his own cannon.

“A friend,” cried the other, “and a great admirer of your valour, Captain; but not a worthy object for its display.”

“My dear friend, Shargeloes!” replied the

Captain, a little ashamed of his own vigilance. "How are you, my dear sir, and how is the system?"

"The system will never recover from the tricks that infernal Carne has played with it. But never mind that, if the intellect survives; we all owe a debt to our Country. I have met you in the very nick of time. Yesterday was Guy Fawkes' day, and I wanted to be married then; but the people were not ready. I intend to have it now on New Year's day, because then I shall always remember the date. I am going up here, to make a strange request; and I want you to say that it is right and proper. An opinion from a distinguished sailor will go a long way with the daughters of an Admiral. I want the young ladies to be my bridesmaids—and then for the little ones, your Maggy and your Kitty. I am bound to go to London, for a month to-morrow; and then I could order all the bracelets, and the brooches, if I were only certain who the blessed four would be."

"I never had any bridesmaids myself; and I don't know anything about them. I thought that the ladies were the people to settle that."

"The ladies are glad to be relieved of the expense; and I wish to start well," replied Shargeloes. "Why are ninety-nine men out of a hundred henpecked?"

“I am sure I don’t know, except that they can’t help it. But have you heard the great news of this evening?”

“The reason is,” continued the member of the Corporation, “that they begin with being nobodies. They leave the whole management of their weddings to the women; and they never recover the reins. Miss Twemlow is one of the most charming of her sex; but she has a decided character, which properly guided will be admirable. But to give it the lead at the outset would be fatal to future happiness. Therefore, I take this affair upon myself. I pay for it all; and I mean to do it all.”

“What things you do learn in London!” the Captain answered with a sigh. “Oh, if I had only had the money—but it is too late to talk of that. Once more, have you heard the news?”

“About the great battle, and the death of Nelson? Yes, I heard of all that this morning. But I left it to come in proper course from you. Now here we are; mind you back me up. The Lord Mayor is coming to be my best man.”

The two sisters, dressed in the deepest mourning, and pale with long sorrow and loneliness, looked wholly unfit for festive scenes; and as soon as they heard of this new distress—the loss of their father’s dearest friend, and their

own beloved hero, they left the room, to have a good cry together, while their brother entertained the visitors. "It can't be done now," Mr. Shargeloes confessed; "and after all, Eliza is the proper person. I must leave that to her; but nothing else that I can think of. There can't be much harm in my letting her do that."

It was done by a gentleman after all; for the worthy rector did it. The bride would liefer have dispensed with bridesmaids so much fairer than herself; and although unable to advance that reason, found fifty others against asking them. But her father had set his mind upon it, and together with his wife so pressed the matter, that Faith and Dolly, much against their will, consented to come out of mourning for a day, but not into gay habiliments.

The bride was attired wonderfully, stunningly, carnageously,—as Johnny, just gifted with his commission, and thereby with much slang, described her. And in truth she carried her bunting well, as Captain Stubbard told his wife, and Captain Tugwell confirmed it. But the eyes of everybody with half an eye followed the two forms in silver-grey. That was the nearest approach to brightness those lovers of their father allowed themselves, within five months of his tragic death; though if the old Admiral could have looked down from the main-top, probably

he would have shouted—"No flags at half-mast for me, my pets!"

Two young men, with melancholy glances, followed those fair bridesmaids, being tantalized by these nuptial rites, because they knew no better. One of them hoped that his time would come, when he had pushed his great discovery; and if the art of photography had been known, his face would have been his fortune. For he bore, at the very top of it, the seal and stamp of his patent—the manifest impact of a bullet, diffracted by the power of *Pong*. The roots of his hair—the terminus of blushes, according to all good novelists—had served an even more useful purpose, by enabling him to blush again. Strengthened by *Pong*, they had defied the lead, and deflected it into a shallow channel, already beginning to be overgrown by the aid of that same potent drug. Erle Twemlow looked little the worse for his wound; to a lady perhaps, to a man of science certainly, more interesting than he had been before. As he gazed at the bride all bespangled with gold, he felt that he had in his trunk the means of bespangling his bride with diamonds. But the worst of it was, that he must wait, and fight, and perhaps get killed, before he could settle in life, and make his fortune. As an officer of a marching regiment, ordered to rejoin immediately, he must flesh his sword in lather

first—for he had found no razor strong enough—and postpone the day of riches till the golden date of peace.

The other young man had no solace of wealth, even in the blue distance, to whisper to his troubled heart. Although he was a real “Captain Scuddy” now (being posted to the *Danæ*, 42-gun frigate), the capacity of his cocked hat would be tried by no shower of gold impending. For mighty dread of the Union-jack had fallen upon the tricolor; that gallant flag perceived at last that its proper flight was upon dry land, where as yet there was none to flout it. Trafalgar had reduced by a thousand per cent the British sailor’s chance of prize-money.

Such computations were not, however, the chief distress of Scudamore. The happiness of his fair round face was less pronounced than usual, because he had vainly striven for an interview with his loved one. With all her faults, he loved her still, and longed to make them all his own. He could not help being sadly shocked, by her fatal coquetry with the traitor Carne, and slippery conduct to his own poor self. But love in his faithful heart maintained, that she had already atoned for that, too bitterly and too deeply; and the settled sorrow of her face, and listless submission of her movements, showed that she was now a very different

Dolly. Faith, who had always been grave enough, seemed gaiety itself, in comparison with her younger sister, once so gay. In their simple dresses—grey jaconet muslin, sparsely trimmed with lavender—and wearing no jewel or ornament, but a single snowdrop in the breast, the lovely bridesmaids looked as if they defied all the world to make them brides.

But the rector would not let them off from coming to the breakfast-party; and with the well-bred sense of fitness they obeyed his bidding. Captain Stubbard (whose jokes had missed fire too often, to be satisfied with a small touch-hole now) was broadly facetious at their expense; and Johnny, returning thanks for them, surprised the good company by his manly tone, and contempt of life, before beginning it. This invigorated Scudamore, by renewing his faith in human nature, as a thing beyond calculation. He whispered a word, or so, to his friend Johnny; while Mr. and Mrs. Shargeloes were bowing farewell from the windows of a great family-coach from London, which the Lord Mayor had lent them, to make up for not coming. For come he could not (though he longed to do so, and all Springhaven expected him) on account of the great preparations in hand for the funeral of Lord Nelson.

“Thy servant will see to it,” the boy replied,

with a wink at his sisters, whom he was to lead home ; for Sir Francis had made his way down to the beach, to meditate his new poem, *Theriodemos*.

“His behaviour,” thought Dolly, as she put on her cloak, “has been perfect. How thankful I feel for it ! He never cast one glance at me. He quite enters into my feelings towards him. But how much more credit to his mind, than to his heart !”

Scudamore, at a wary distance, kept his eyes upon her, as if she had been a French frigate gliding under strong land-batteries, from which he must try to cut her out. Presently he saw that his good friend Johnny had done him the service requested. At a fork of the path leading to the Hall, Miss Dolly departed towards the left, upon some errand among the trees ; while her brother and sister went on towards the house. Forgetting the dignity of a Post-Captain, the gallant Scuddy made a cut across the grass, as if he were playing prisoner’s base with the boys at Stonnington, and intercepted the fair prize in a bend of the brook, where the winter sun was nursing the first primrose.

“You, Captain Scudamore !” said the bridesmaid, turning as if she could never trust her eyes again. “You must have lost your way ! This path leads nowhere.”

“If it only leads to you, that is all that I could wish for. I am content to go to nothing, if I may only go with you.”

“My brother sent me,” said Dolly, looking down, with more colour on her cheeks than they had owned for months, and the snowdrop quivering on her breast, “to search for a primrose or two, for him to wear, when he dines at the rectory this evening. We shall not go, of course. We have done enough. But Frank, and Johnny, think they ought to go.”

“May I help you to look? I am lucky in that way. I used to find so many things with you, in the happy times that used to be.” Blyth saw that her eyelids were quivering with tears. “I will go away, if you would rather have it so. But you used to be so good-natured to me.”

“So I am still. Or, at least, I mean that people should now be good-natured to me. Oh, Captain Scudamore, how foolish I have been!”

“Don’t say so, don’t think it, don’t believe it for a moment;” said Scudamore, scarcely knowing what he said, as she burst into a storm of sobbing. “Oh, Dolly, Dolly, you know you meant no harm. You are breaking your darling heart; when you don’t deserve it. I could not bear to look at you, and think of it, this morning. Everybody loves you still, as much, and more

than ever. Oh, Dolly, I would rather die, than see you cry so terribly."

"Nobody loves me; and I hate myself. I could never have believed, I should ever hate myself. Go away; you are too good to be near me. Go away, or I shall think you want to kill me. And I wish you would do it, Captain Scudamore."

"Then let me stop;" said the Captain, very softly. She smiled at the turn of his logic, through her tears. Then she wept, with new anguish—that she had no right to smile.

"Only tell me one thing—may I hold you? Not of course from any right to do it, but because you are so overcome, my own, own Dolly."

The Captain very cleverly put one arm round her, at first with a very light touch; and then with a firmer clasp, as she did not draw away. Her cloak was not very cumbrous; and her tumultuous heart was but a little way from his.

"You know that I never could help loving you," he whispered; as she seemed to wonder what the meaning was. "May I ever hope that you will like me?"

"Me! How can it matter now to anybody? I used to think it did; but I was very foolish then. I know my own value. It is less than this. This little flower has been a good crea-

ture. It has been true to its place, and hurt nobody."

Instead of seeking for any more flowers, she was taking from her breast the one she had—the snowdrop, and threatening to tear it in pieces.

"If you give it to me, I shall have some hope." As he spoke, he looked at her steadfastly, without any shyness or fear in his eyes; but as one who knows his own good heart, and has a right to be answered clearly. The maiden, in one glance, understood all the tales of his wonderful daring; which she never used to believe, because he seemed afraid to look at her.

"You may have it, if you like," she said; "but, Blyth, I shall never deserve you. I have behaved to you shamefully. And I feel, as if I could never bear to be forgiven for it."

For the sake of peace and happiness, it must be hoped that she conquered this feminine feeling, which springs from an equity of nature,—the desire that none should do to us, more than we ever could do to them. Certain it is that when the rector held his dinner-party, two gallant bosoms throbbed, beneath the emblem of purity and content. The military captain's snowdrop hung, where every one might observe it; and some gentle-witted jokes were made about its whereabouts that morning. By and by, it grew weary on its stalk, and fell; and Erle

Twemlow never missed it. But the other snow-drop was not seen; except by the wearer, with a stolen glance, when people were making a loyal noise—a little glance stolen at his own heart. He had made a little cuddy there, inside his inner sarcenet, and down his plaited neck-cloth ran a sly companion-way to it; so that his eyes might steal a visit to the joy that was over his heart and in it. Thus are women adored by men; especially those who deserve it least.

“Attention, my dear friends, attention, if you please!” cried the Rector rising, with a keen glance at Scuddy. “I will crave your attention, before the ladies go; and theirs—for it concerns them equally. We have passed through a period of dark peril; a long time of trouble, and anxiety, and doubt. By the mercy of the Lord, we have escaped; but with losses that have emptied our poor hearts. England has lost her two foremost defenders,—Lord Nelson, and Admiral Darling. To them we owe it, that we are now beginning the New Year happily, with the blessing of Heaven, and my dear daughter married. Next week, we shall attend the grand funeral of the hero, and obtain good places by due influence. My son-in-law, Percival Shargeloes, can do just as he pleases, at St. Paul’s. Therefore let us now, with deep thanksgiving, and one hand upon

our hearts, lift up our glasses, and in silence pledge the memory of our greatest men. With the spirit of Britons, we echo the last words that fell from the lips of our dying hero—‘Thank God. I have done my duty!’ His seat shall be at the Lord’s right hand, and his memory shall abide for ever; because he loved his Country.”

The company rose, laid hand on heart, and deeply bowing said—“Amen!”

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